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A Study of the Relationship Between School Climate and Adequate Yearly Progress

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A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOL CLIMATE AND ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

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Creating and maintaining a positive school climate can affect an individual's attitude, their capacity to retain information, and their ability to perform at full potential within the school. In order to thoroughly understand the effectiveness of their educational program, school leaders must understand the role leadership and change has on the climate of the school and their school's ability to achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). This study explored the factors related to school climate that may or may not impact a school's ability to achieve AYP.

A survey was used to determine if there was a difference in school climate among five middle schools that have not achieved AYP for four consecutive years and six middle schools that did not achieve AYP for three consecutive years, but did achieve AYP in the fourth year.

Analysis of the survey results focused on the overall climate and 16 sub-categories. Six of the sub-categories related to teacher job satisfaction including: Role Conflict, Job Autonomy, Importance, Pressure, Work Group

Cooperation, and Esprit de Corps. Nine additional sub-categories related to how the principal influences the working climate and are identified as: Leader Support, Goal Emphasis, Work and Interaction Facilitation, Upward Interaction, Trust, Openness of Expression, Decision Making, and Planning Effectiveness. The final sub-category related to how teachers interact with students.

The researcher concluded that a one year positive change in Pennsylvania System of School Assessment scores may not have a dramatic effect on school climate. No significant difference was found for the overall climate in each of the 16 sub-categories in the schools. Although no statistical significant difference was found between the means in each sub-category, slightly more positive means were seen in 6 of the 16 sub-categories. In addition, chi-square revealed significant differences between the schools in 10 of the 67 survey statements. A close analysis of the differences between sub-categories and survey items for the schools allowed the researcher to draw several conclusions pertaining to the principal, the teachers, the impact of testing on student achievement, the need for close monitoring of school climate, and the importance of ensuring that teachers have autonomy.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Creating a positive school climate is a topic that the superintendent and board of education in most school districts find themselves discussing at one time or another as they work to develop successful educational programs for students within their districts. A common assumption has been that school administrators should focus their efforts to improve climate by enhancing staff morale. Many people believe that a positive climate for teaching and learning helps to increase the odds that more individuals will achieve academic success. School climate however, should not be confused with school culture. Freiberg (1998) distinguished between climate and culture in how schools are viewed, with school or organizational climate being viewed from a psychological perspective and school culture viewed from an anthropological perspective. Evidence in the literature supports the belief that the social climate of a school and the morale of the staff can have a positive effect on individual's attitudes, their capacity to retain information, and their ability to perform at full potential. This research study will focus specifically on the impact that leadership and change has on the overall

climate of the schools and their ability to achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

Improving the climate and morale also makes teaching a more pleasant experience (Miller, 1981). For students, a positive climate at school may have a direct impact on their academic achievement. A school climate that is positive can be characterized by staff and student cohesiveness, high morale, and an environment where caring, mutual respect, and trust are evident. There is a significant amount of research that supports the impact of a positive school climate and its effect on students. What impact, however, does a positive school climate have on a schools' ability to achieve AYP as defined by the federal *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) legislation that is part of the Pennsylvania Accountability System?

The Pennsylvania Accountability System applies to all public schools and districts within the state. It is based upon the state's content achievement standards, measures of academic achievement that are considered to be valid and reliable, and additional key indicators of school and district performance such as attendance and graduation rates. The Pennsylvania Accountability System meets the requirements of the federal NCLB legislation and has the same end goal--every child in the Commonwealth will be

proficient or advanced in reading and mathematics by the year 2014. Although they increase over time, the AYP targets for 2004 were 45% of students proficient in reading and 35% proficient in math; 95% participation on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA); and an improvement in attendance and graduation rates. Schools are evaluated based on the minimum AYP target level of improvement that is set for each year.

Since pioneering research on the organizational properties of schools was conducted in the 1960s, school climate has become an important perspective for analyzing the general nature of schools (Johnson, 1996). The nature of the school workplace has long been of interest to scholars of educational organizations, but it is only recently that other educational researchers and school reformers have become fascinated with the topic as well (Hoy, 1990).

Socio-economic status plays a vital role in the tone of the school climate. The problems of chronically poor school districts are difficult and intractable. The broader issues of poverty in school communities can have a negative affect on both students and schools. Children who attend urban schools in low-income areas consistently show the lowest academic achievement and the poorest social

skill development in the country. These schools have the lowest ratings of school climate (Esposito, 1999).

It has been shown that as school staff take steps to improve the climate of the school, the academic and social outcomes for children improve (Edwards, 1993; Killin & Williams, 1995). The measurement of productivity in a school system must relate to the social and academic growth of its students. A basic question, then, is: How is a productive learning climate created? Statistics give strong support to the hypothesis that leader behavior of the principal, as perceived by his/her staff, is significantly related to the productivity of the school. In addition, teachers must be receptive to making the changes necessary to improve the quality of the programs offered in schools.

Obviously, behaviors which will improve the morale of individuals and produce an improved school climate must be nurtured. When Codianni and Wilburn (1983) compared the findings of 17 major studies on effective schools, they identified 6 recurring themes: positive school climate; emphasis on basic skills; high student expectations; continuous assessment of learning; strong leadership; and, systematic staff development (Johnson, 1996). If efforts are to be successful, there must be participation of staff

in professional development experiences that help build and strengthen their skill levels as educators. In addition, promising programs that are being implemented elsewhere should be investigated.

The factors that researchers' believe influence positive student achievement are often directly related to a positive school climate. Schools can make a difference in what happens to the people who work and study in school environments (Kelley, 1981). Much of the research studied addresses the impact of school climate on student academic attainment and achievement. None of the studies reviewed explored how the school climate may or may not help schools to make AYP as expected by the federal NCLB legislation.

Need for the Study

With the increased pressure placed on schools to achieve AYP to be in compliance with the NCLB federal legislation, the demand placed upon schools to improve can have a positive or negative impact on a school's learning climate. Numerous studies have sought to describe factors that influence the climate within a school and the effects on student achievement (Esposito, 1999; Taylor, & Tashakkori, 1995), but none describe the impact that school climate has on a schools' ability to achieve AYP. What

motivates teachers to continuously search for new and improved strategies they can implement to assist students on their journey to become life long learners? To provide a framework to answer this question studies related to school change, educational leadership, and the importance of building staff morale will be reviewed.

The road to success is always under construction (Hall & Hord, 2001). Change is what facilitates the process of construction within public schools and no teacher working within the learning organization can escape it. Some believe it is the interactions between the change facilitators and the teachers implementing the changes that ultimately measure if the road that is being constructed will be successful. Careful attention to a small number of key details during the change process can result in the feelings of success, new commitments, and the excitement and energizing satisfaction of accomplishing something that is important (Fullan, 2001).

For the past 27 years Hall and Hord (2001) worked with a team of researchers originally assembled together at the University of Texas at Austin, to study the change process in schools, colleges, businesses, and government agencies. The concepts and results of their research are based on a particular approach they refer to as the *Concerns-Based*

Approach. The approach comes from a conceptual framework known as the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM), originally proposed in 1973 (Hall, Wallace, & Dossett, 1973). Understanding the clients is the most important part of the concerns-based perspective.

Systematically, concerns-based theorists charted what happens to people and organizations when they are involved in change. Through their research, they identified and confirmed a set of seven specific categories of concerns that people experience throughout the process of change. They refer to the following seven categories listed as the Stages of Concern:

Stages of Concern	Expressions of Concern
6 Refocusing	I have some ideas about something that would work even better.
5 Collaboration	I am concerned about relating what I am doing with what my co-workers are doing.
4 Consequence	How is my use affecting clients?
3 Management	I seem to be spending all of my time getting materials ready.
2 Personal	How will using it affect me?
1 Informational	I would like to know more about it.

0 Awareness I am not concerned about it.

Hall and Hord (2001) stated that there is a quasi-developmental path to the concerns as a change process unfolds. The flow of concerns however, is not always guaranteed, nor does it always move in one direction. If the change is appropriate, if the principal is initiating, and if the change process is carefully facilitated, then teachers will move from early self concerns to task concerns (during the first years of use), and ultimately to impact concerns (after three to five years).

An additional important result of concerns-based theorists' long-term collaborative research agenda was 12 principles that are foundational to ways of thinking about change. Hall and Hord (2001) state in their 12 principles of change that change is a process, not an event and that there are significant differences in what is entailed in development and implementation of an innovation. They state that an organization does not change until the individuals within it change, that innovations come in different sizes, and that interventions are actions and events that are key to the success of the change process. Both believe that although both top-down and bottom-up change can work, a horizontal perspective is best and that administrator leadership is essential to long-term change

success. In addition, they feel that mandates can work and that the school is the primary unit of change as long as the individual facilitating change understands that it is a team effort. They conclude by stating appropriate interventions reduce the challenges of change and the context of the school influences the process of change.

These change principles provide the foundation representing some of the predictable patterns about change in organizational settings. In addition, Hall and Hord's research on Change Facilitator Style is addressed to help people understand that leaders do make differences in the change process. Organizational theorists, such as Stephen Covey would agree. Covey (2004), in his book *The 8th HABIT: From Effectiveness to Greatness,* points out that effective leaders must first find his/her voice and inspire others to find theirs. He believes that most great cultural shifts resulting in great organizations started with the choice of one person. People in each organization construct a culture based on values and norms which represent the beginning context for change.

Leaders and their abilities to provide leadership have been the subject of study and theorizing for a large part of the 20th century. The long and extensive legacy of research, theory, and model-building about leadership,

however, has focused primarily on business and industry contexts. Minimal research has been done with education organizations and even less about the individuals who lead change.

Covey (2004) points out how important the subject of leadership really is when he calls it the *enabling* art. He believes that the purpose of schools is educating kids, but if you have bad leadership, you have bad education. His literature review reinforced that both management and leadership are vital--but either one without the other is insufficient. He explains that we can “lead” (empower) people because they have the power and freedom to choose but we must manage and control “things” like cash flow and cost.

Hall and Hord’s (2001) research explored leaders and how their ability to lead affected teacher success and sometimes lack of success in implementing change. Their research analyzed a very extensive set of data about teachers’ Stages of Concern (SOC), Levels of Use (LOU), and Innovation Configuration (IC) Maps. They completed a two-year study of teachers’ implementation of an innovative science curriculum in a large suburban district. Although each teacher who had participated in the carefully designed workshops had received the exact same training, they were

not at the same point in terms of implementation at the conclusion of the two year training sessions. Puzzled about how to explain the data since all of the teachers had received the same district workshops and the same curriculum materials, the authors quickly realized that it was the principals and their leadership styles in the schools that positively or negatively affected the process of change. The concept of Change Facilitator (CF) Style emerged as a result of this research.

The first study on change facilitator styles was the Principal/Teacher Interaction (PTI) Study (Hord & Huling-Austin, 1986). In the study, Hord and Hulling-Austin used full-time ethnographers to systematically document the interventions of nine elementary school principals for an entire school year. They also assessed implementation by measuring teachers' Stages of Concern, Levels of Use, and Innovation Configurations. The researchers found that there were statistically significant differences in the quantity and the quality of the principals' interventions, and that they could be clustered according to three hypothesized Change Facilitator Styles (Hall, et al., 1984; Hall & Hord, 1987).

Hall and Hord (2001) identified three different change facilitator styles as a result of their studies of

principals: the Initiator, the Manager, and the Responder. Initiators have clear and strongly held visions about what their school should be like. Some principals are actively engaged as initiators of continuous improvements in their schools (Fullan, 2001). They motivate staff members and continually articulate what the school can become. Managers approach leadership with a goal of making the school operate like a well-oiled machine. They strive to make everything run like clock work. The primary focus of the Responder's approach to leadership pertains to what is happening at the present time. A vision for the future of the school and its programs is highly unlikely in the mind of a principal with a Responder style of leadership. The leadership style of the Change Facilitator can make a major difference in the implementation success of the followers. The principal is in the center of the relationship between teachers and external ideas and people (Fullan, 2001).

Estimates of the organizational climate were found to be related to the Change Facilitator Style. How teachers feel about their school and their perceptions about what counts often are a reflection of the style of their leader. The general trend was that organizational climate was more positive in schools with Manager and Initiator principals than with Responder principals. Organizational culture in

schools with Responder principals seemed to be much less healthy and lacked professionalism (Hall & Hord, 2001).

William Butler Yeats (1962) once said, “Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.” This phrase rings true when we think of teachers educating students, but it also can apply for educational leaders. Both must be excited about their jobs and view school as an invigorating place to practice their chosen profession. Each must light the fire and the passion within the people they work with each day. This is one of the most important aspects of their jobs since the actions and decisions made affect morale. When teacher’s morale is energized and productive, great things happen in classrooms. When great things happen in the classroom, the future of every child in the room is brighter. This ultimately leads to increases in academic success for each child and schools will inevitably become stronger (Whitaker, Whitaker, & Lumpa, 2000).

Increased attention has focused on context, climate, and/or culture of the school. This factor directly influences the workplace of the professionals involved and subsequently their responses to change (Hall & Hord, 2001). In a review of the literature on context that supports or inhibits change, Boyd (1992) defined two components of

context. The first component includes the physical aspects of the organization such as its facilities, schedules, policies, etc. The second component involves the beliefs and values held by the members and the norms that guide their behavior, relationships, and attitudes. Acquiring meaning is an individual act, but its real value for student learning is when shared meaning is achieved across a group of people working in concert (Fullan, 2001). A small faculty in a small facility will find it much easier to meet, interact, and develop trust than a larger faculty spread over many buildings. In addition, a supportive context decreases the isolation of the staff, provides for the continuing increase of its capabilities, and nurtures positive relationships among all staff, students, and parents/community members. Ultimately, it urges the unceasing quest for increased effectiveness leading to student benefit.

Organizations that perform effectively and, at times at a level that greatly exceeds anyone’s expectations, exhibit characteristics and qualities that, if identified and practiced in less outstanding organizations, could produce the same kind of high quality performance (Morgan, 1993). A study to identify the positive attributes of effective school climates that may assist educational

leaders with their journey to seek and maintain adequate yearly progress (AYP) can be both inspirational and enlightening.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this quantitative study was to understand the relationship between school climate and the AYP that schools are expected to achieve each year. Six middle schools that made AYP within the state of Pennsylvania during the 2006-2007 school year after not making AYP during the three previous school years were compared with five middle schools that failed to make AYP for four consecutive years and were consequently placed on a list for school improvement by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

A tremendous amount of research is currently available that identifies and supports strategies for teaching and learning that are highly effective. Teachers can no longer afford to maintain the “status quo” for teaching and learning that so many have in the past. Technology is just one example of a major change that schools are experiencing today. In addition, teachers now have access to high quality assessments and effective strategies and tools for helping children to learn that are unlike any they have had

or seen in the past. With all of the changes that teachers face, and the demand for increased levels of accountability, the stress of dealing with the changes certainly has an impact on the climate of the school. School climate is perhaps one of the most commonly ignored components of organizational change by administrators. If however, a positive school climate helps increase the chances that schools will meet the expectations set by the federal government for making AYP each year, then building and maintaining a positive school climate should be on the top of the principal's "things to do" list.

Research Questions

During the course of this study the following inquiries guided the investigation:

1. Is there a difference in school climate between five middle schools in Pennsylvania that did not achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for four consecutive years with six middle schools in Pennsylvania that did not achieve AYP for three consecutive years but did achieve AYP in the fourth year as defined by Gene Hall's School Ecology Survey (SES)?

Sub questions:

a. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions between these two types of schools in terms of Role Conflict?
b. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions between these two types of schools in terms of Job Autonomy?
c. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions between these two types of schools in terms of Job Importance?
d. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions between these two types of schools in terms of Job Pressure?
e. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions between these two types of schools in terms of Leader Support?
f. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions between these two types of schools in terms of Leader Goal Emphasis?
g. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions between these two types of schools in terms of Leader Work Facilitation?

h. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions between these two types of schools in terms of Leader Interaction Facilitation?
i. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions between these two types of schools in terms of Leader Upward Interaction?
j. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions between these two types of schools in terms of Leader Confidence and Trust?
k. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions between these two types of schools in terms of Workgroup Cooperation, Friendliness, and Warmth?
l. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions between these two types of schools in terms of Openness of Expression?
m. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions between these two types of schools in terms of Esprit de Corps?
n. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions between these two types of schools in terms of Planning and Effectiveness?

o. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions between these two types of schools in terms of Decision-Making Characteristics?
p. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions between these two types of schools in terms of Student Characteristics?

Purpose of the Study

In this study, the school climate in five middle schools that did not achieve AYP for four consecutive years was compared with the school climate in six middle schools that did not achieve AYP for three consecutive years but did achieve AYP in the fourth year. The researcher compared the 11 middle schools to see if there was a difference in school climate.

A list of middle schools in Pennsylvania that did not make AYP for four consecutive years was purposefully compiled and five were randomly selected from the list to be included in this study. An additional list of middle schools in Pennsylvania that did not achieve AYP for three consecutive years but did achieve AYP in the fourth year was created and six of the middle schools on the list were also randomly selected for this study. All 11 of the middle schools were compared using the School Ecology

Survey developed by Gene Hall and the Concerns Based Systems International.

Creemers and Reezigt (2003) believe that classroom climate factors exert a direct influence on outcomes and that climate has a direct influence on the motivation of students for learning. Lemoine (2004) stated that a school's climate will determine its effectiveness on student and teacher factors such as academic achievement. McKinsey (2002) concludes that additionally, most educators believe the school's atmosphere is an important influence on students' personal development, motivation, and academic performance. Taylor and Tashakkori (1995) agree and point out that an important aim for future research is to examine the impact of school climate on student academic achievement.

Definition of Key Terms

The following terms are defined to aid in the understanding of the problem statement and research question relevant to this research:

School Climate: The relatively enduring quality of the school environment that is experienced by participants, affects their behavior, and is based on their collective perceptions of behavior in schools (Hoy, 1990).

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP): A minimum target level of improvement that schools are evaluated on in the state of Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania Accountability System: Applies to all public schools and districts. It is based upon the State's content and achievement standards, valid and reliable measures of academic achievement, and other key indicators of school and district performance such as attendance and graduation rates.

Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA): A standards based criterion-referenced assessment used to measure a student's attainment of the academic standards while also determining the degree to which school programs enable students to attain proficiency of the standards.

School Improvement List: Warning means that the school fell short of the AYP targets but has another year to achieve them. These schools are not subject to consequences. Rather, they should examine, and where necessary modify, their improvement strategies so they will meet targets next year. If a school does not meet its AYP for two consecutive years, it is designated as needing improvement and is placed in one of the following categories:

- School Improvement I

If a school does not meet its AYP for two years in a row, students will be eligible for school choice, school officials will develop an improvement plan to turn around the school, and the school will receive technical assistance to help it get back on the right track.

- School Improvement II

If a school or district does not meet its AYP for three years in a row, it must continue to offer public school choice and plan improvements. Additionally, the school or district will need to offer supplemental education services such as tutoring. The district will be responsible for paying for these additional services.

- Corrective Action I

A school or district is categorized in Corrective Action I when it does not meet its AYP for four consecutive years. At this level, schools are eligible for various levels of technical assistance and are subject to escalating consequences (e.g., changes in curriculum, leadership, professional development).

- Corrective Action II

  If a school or district does not meet its AYP for five years in a row, it is subject to governance changes such as reconstitution, chartering, and privatization. In the meantime, improvement plans, school choice, and supplemental education services are still required.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study are as follows:

1. This study was limited to five middle schools that did not achieve AYP for four consecutive years in Pennsylvania and six middle schools that did not achieve AYP for three consecutive years but did achieve AYP in the fourth year in the state of Pennsylvania.
2. This study was limited to classroom teachers working within the five middle schools being studied that did not achieve AYP for four consecutive years in Pennsylvania and classroom teachers working within the six middle schools being studied in Pennsylvania that did not achieve AYP for three consecutive years but did achieve AYP in the fourth year.

Summary

Organizations are mini-societies that have their own variations of culture and subculture. The individuals working within each culture have different perceptions about their organizational climate. One organization may see itself as a tight-knit team or family that believes in working together. Another may be permeated by the idea that “we’re the best in the occupation and intend to stay that way.” Yet another may be highly fragmented, divided into groups that think about the world in very different ways or have different aspirations as to what the future holds for their organization. The patterns of belief or shared meaning, fragmented or integrated, and supported by various operating norms and rituals can exert a decisive influence on the overall ability of the organization to deal with the changes that it faces (Morgan, 1997).

Senge (2000) describes how much of the discussion today around school reform takes place in a power-coercive framework. State legislatures announce that, in effect, “These children *will* achieve.” Regardless of whether they have been fed well, live in safe neighborhoods, have parents at home, have good medical care, or live in a peaceful and tranquil environment, they will be judged against the children who have these things. Teachers are

told, “You *will* have high test scores, or we will close you down.” The states, in effect, are like agriculture departments telling a farmer, “You *will* have a high crop yield this year. We want the corn to ripen in 45 days where before it took 66, and it better be good corn.” The results they want are laudable, but they show no awareness of the process that must occur naturally to produce those results. An awareness of school climate, and the role that it plays in student learning and achievement, can foster resilience or become a risk factor in the lives of people who work and learn in the school (Freiberg & Stein, 2003).

Gonder and Hymes (1994) believe that climate must be shaped through instruction and that measuring climate is an important first step toward school improvement. They conclude that no factor has a greater influence on student attitudes, and their part of the climate equation, than the instruction in the classroom. Hall and George (2003) indicate that the climate of the classrooms is nested inside the climate of the school. Although efforts directed outside the classroom may have some effect on the climate of the school, the climate in each classroom of the school directly impacts the school’s ability to achieve AYP. Measuring school climate can give valuable information on how receptive the school community will be

to change. In addition, a school's climate can define the quality of the school that creates healthy learning places; nurtures children's and parents' dreams and aspirations; stimulates teachers' creativity and enthusiasm, promotes achievement, and elevates all of its members (Freiberg & Stein, 2003).

Continuous school improvement requires continuous information about the learner and the learning environment (Frieberg & Stein, 2003). The School Ecology Survey developed by Hall and Griffin (1982) was used as a measure of the school climate for this study. A comparison analysis between the climate of the school and their AYP status was conducted. Six middle schools that did achieve AYP within the state of Pennsylvania during the 2005-2006 school year but did not in the three previous years was compared with five middle schools that had failed to make AYP for four consecutive years and were consequently placed on a list for school improvement by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The demands for accountability within public schools from the *No Child Left* Behind (NCLB) federal legislation, is impacting the climate for learning inside schools throughout the nation. As teachers work diligently to identify strategies which they can implement with students in their classroom to assist them as they struggle to achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), many find themselves discouraged and unacknowledged. Much of the focus is now on improvement of educational programs in schools. Student assessment data is consistently being analyzed and teachers are expected to modify their programs to help more students achieve proficiency on the state assessment. Understanding the relationships between the various factors that contribute to effectiveness in schools is more important now than ever before. The purpose of this quantitative study will be to understand the relationship between school climate and the AYP that schools are expected to achieve each year. Six middle schools that finally made AYP within the fourth year after not making AYP during the three previous school years were

compared with five middle schools that have failed to make AYP for four consecutive years.

Classroom teachers are feeling more anxiety now than ever before due to the amount of accountability being placed on schools as a result of the expectations and requirements of AYP with NCLB. The added level of stress that teachers experience as they struggle to achieve AYP may directly impact the climate for learning within the school. This study explored the factors related to school climate that may or may not impact a middle school's ability to achieve AYP. In addition, it analyzed the relationship of AYP and the impact that it may have on school climate within middle schools throughout Pennsylvania.

Climate Theory

The climate within a school organization affects how well schools function. Schools are on the firing line now more than ever, due to the expectations of the NCLB federal legislation and the state's expectation that all schools make AYP. Unfortunately, teachers across the nation complain that the joy is being drained from teaching as their work is reduced to drill and kill worksheets that promote rote memory of children as if they were in dog

obedience school (Meier, Kohn, Hammond, Sizer, & Wood, 2004). In today's educational atmosphere, attention to climate is even more important to ensure that morale stays high and the staff can be cost effective (Gonder & Hymes, 1994).

Climate however, should not be confused with culture since both are concepts that relate to the "feel" of a school, but they influence the life of the organization in different ways. The literature provides a variety of definitions of culture, however, there is plenty of disagreement among writers on how climate and culture are defined (Malak 2002). Both climate and culture are important to the school's quality of life and its ability to produce positive student achievement. The difficulty with these two terms is that despite decades of imperical investigations, the distinct difference of the terms has remained elusive (Anderson, 1982).

One major difference between climate and culture is duration across time. Climate reflects what is happening today and this month; culture involves the values, beliefs, and norms a school staff and community have developed over a long period of time. Some researchers believe that climate as an approach to school reform is grounded in the

discipline of psychology, while culture is based on an anthropological approach.

The early definitions of school climate were narrow. Edmonds (1979), described school climate as “an orderly atmosphere without being rigid, quiet without being oppressive and generally conducive to the instructional business at hand” (p. 16). Lezotte (1980) felt that staff morale, achievement, and the perceptions of external oberservers was the key to school climate. Others like Morrison (1981) believed that school climate could be defined in terms of the student socialization climate in the classroom. Rossow (1990) saw school climate as the overall character of the school. How teachers feel about the school and whether they embrace both physical and social elements help to determine the school climate.

Organizational climate and organizational culture have been terms used interchangeably in educational literature over the past decades to describe the members’ perception of the school environment as an organization (Owens, 1987). Research remains unclear whether culture influences climate or climate influences culture or whether the two terms really differ. Malak (2000) reports that climate can be said to address the descriptive “what” is happening in schools, while culture provides and explanatory “why.”

For the puposes of this research study, climate is the term referring to the atmosphere in a school. It consists of the attitudes shared by students, faculty, community, and staff. Climate is generally considered to be positive or negative, although some aspects of a school climate can be positive while others are negative. Climate characteristics affect the morale, productivity, and satisfaction of people working within the organization. A positive climate results when members feel they are valued as individuals and that they are contributing to the success of the organization.

A specific conclusion that most researchers draw after reviewing studies about change in schools, is that the superintendent and principal can make a significant difference in the organziation. The effects of what the principal does or does not do can be detected throughout the school (Frieberg, 1999). The “feel” that can be experienced upon visiting a school is most always traced back to the principal. The principal plays a significant role in establishing the climate for the school much like the teacher establishes the climate for the classroom. The way in which teachers perceive the actions of the principal leads to the formation of the climate within the school and ultimately the climate within each teacher’s classroom.

Senge (2000) in his book, *Schools That Learn*, states that schools can be re-created, not by command and regulation, but by taking a *learning orientation*. He suggests involving everyone in the system in expressing their aspirations, building their awareness, and developing their capabilities together. In a school that learns, people who traditionally may have been suspicious of one another--parents and teachers, educators, and local business people, administrators and union members, people inside an outside the school walls, students and adults--recognize their common stake in the future of the school system and the things they can learn from one another. Schools that learn have a positive organizational climate.

Morgan (1993) believes that when implementing change initiatives, you have to find that spark of enthusiasm and fan it, because leaders know they cannot build a bonfire. It is important to look for every seed of enthusiasm, and try to build pockets of success. If a leader can get four or five managers to buy into an idea and promote success, they will tell others, and the idea will flurish. This approach to change helps strengthen the climate within the organization.

Like the air we breathe, school climate often tends to go unnoticed until something is seriously wrong. Most

educational communities find themselves concerned with school climate and its effect on student learning in the educational environment when accountability for student achievement is hightened. The pressure to make adequate yearly progress so that a school is not added to the state's warning list of failing schools can either negatively or positively affect the climate of the school. The leadership provided within the organization can certainly help improve or contaminate the climate for learning within the school.

Frieberg and Stein (1999) describe "School climate as the heart and soul of the school" (p. 11). School climate is about the quality of a school, the quality that helps each individual feel personal worth, dignity and importance, while at the same time, helps to create a sense of belonging to something beyond ourselves. Climate has the potential to either foster resilience or become a risk factor for people who work and learn at school. These conclusions were drawn from a program entitled Consistency Management and Cooperative Discipline (CMCD) (Freiberg, 1996, 1999; Freiberg, Stein, & Huang, 1995) that had been in place for two years in a middle school.

There has been extensive research over the last 20 years to identify the factors that make up the quality of a

school. The Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD, 2005) identified seven school organizational factors important to school effectiveness: Productive Climate, Achievement, Educational Leadership, Monitoring, Co-operation, Parental Involvement, and Staff Development.

The research on climate includes many studies. Some see schools as though they were factories and identified important inputs needed to obtain desired outputs (Mott, 1972). Others see schools as though they were families and stress the dynamics of caring which ultimately lead to healthy development (Levine, 1991). Research methodology known as meta-analysis in which findings of many research studies are aggregated are used to produce this perspective on the framework of school climate. One specific research study reported by Wang, Haertel, and Walberg (1997) found that “School climate and different kinds of instruction that engage students with inquiry and investigations can impact a student’s willingness and desire to learn and thus produce a positive school climate”.

A data base was created in the Walberg, et al. (1997) study consisting of more than 11,000 statistical findings from which the most significant influences on learning were identified. There was a total of 28 categories that

impacted learning. Classroom management ranked highest on the list and had the most significant influence on student learning. It was followed next by metacognitive and cognitive processes, home environment, parental support, student/teacher social interactions, school climate, school culture, quality of instruction, peer group, motivational effective attributes, and social behavior. Though probably not a surprise, state and school level policies, school organization and demographics had the least influence on learning. The implications of the meta-analysis combined with stories and learner perceptions from other sources were significant in that they support the idea that climate is measurable and it is a real factor in the lives of learners (Freiberg, 1999).

Measuring climate can provide valuable information on how receptive the school community is or will be toward change. Stevens and Sanchez (1999) explain that, “The perceptions of students, parents, and the community are key components for creating an atmosphere where teachers can teach, students can learn, parents can take an active role in the education of their children, and excellence can be achieved” (p. 124).

Climate does not exist in a vacuum within the school. Forces outside the school building also impact on the

school's reputation and, ultimately, its effectiveness. It is important to consider key factors such as cultural norms and community attitudes when attempting to improve climate within a school. Socio-economic status also plays an important role in the tone of the school climate. Problems of chronically poor school districts, which are usually classified as lower socioeconomic communities often lack adequate funding and resources, and money often helps to bring change. Students from generational poverty need to build cognitive structures necessary for learning. They need to establish relationships that will motivate them to learn and the hidden rules (as Ruby Payne defines them) must be taught so they can choose the appropriate response if they so desire (Payne, 2004).

The broader issues of poverty in school communities can have a negative effect on both students and schools. Children who attend urban schools in low-income areas consistently show the lowest academic achievement and the poorest social skills in the country. It is important that schools take the initiative to build strong partnerships and make parents feel welcome in low-income and multicultural communities (Gonder & Hymes, 1994). But how is this accomplished? Partnerships must be nurtured in low socioeconomic schools by developing through consistent two-

way communication between parents, teachers, and school administrators. When two-way communication is present, strong relationships can be developed between the home and school. If schools can build positive relationships along with an emphasis on effort, then schools will have an impact on struggling learner's success and achievement (Purkey & Smith, 1983).

Communication plays a vital role in shaping school climate. Hall and Hord (2001) state that a frequent problem for teachers who are expected to implement new practices is that they are not clear about what they are being asked to do. Even when training and materials are provided, there is a big leap from preparing to do something to then actually doing it. Ultimately, what the teachers do in the classroom may bear little resemblance to what the principal, initiating the change, had in mind originally. Principals must work collaboratively with teachers so that they can clearly communicate what the expectations are if there is to be success in any change effort. For example, the principal can organize strategic planning meetings with teachers that are designed to solicit feedback from them regarding the direction the committee must take with regard to school improvement. The relationships that are developed between the principal and

the teachers during this process, help strengthen the overall climate within the organization.

Pearce (2002) suggests that although the building principal is ultimately responsible for the quality of the school, it is both necessary and appropriate that teachers share the responsibility for instructional leadership. Instructional leadership can only be shared however, through close communication between the teachers and the principal. For example, the principal can work closely with his or her teachers to create a Teacher Learning Community (TLC) in which members meet regularly with the principal to advise, offer feedback, and make recommendations for change before ideas are presented to the entire faculty. These meetings provide an avenue for expressing concerns from the faculty to the administration. As a result, TLC members begin to realize that they can impact the school climate through structured communication and cooperation between faculty and administration.

This research study focused specifically on school climate as perceived by teachers. The climate of each middle school selected to participate in the study was measured using the School Ecology Survey (SES) created by Gene E. Hall and the Concerns Based Systems International. In addition, the SES was used to gather data that provided

valuable information about the impact of principal leadership on the climate of each school.

Change Theory

Hall and Hord (2001) state a major reason that widespread change often occurs only modestly across a school is that the implementers, change facilitators, and policy-makers do not fully understand what the change is or what it will look like when it is implemented in the envisioned way. This kind of confusion could cause principals to give conflicting signals and teachers will develop their own versions of the change as they try to understand and use the materials and processes that have been advocated. The challenge for evaluators then becomes their ability to appraise whether the new way is better than the old. It is extremely important for school principals to work closely with teachers to develop a clear vision for the changes that need to be made so that it can serve as a road map to successful implementation.

We are experiencing some fundamental changes in education today in the public schools. The traditional education system that many people grew up in was designed for a very different world from the one we live in today. In the Industrial Age, many more workers than thinkers were

required and our schools operated like sorting systems rather than operating like learning systems. Today's Technological Age is creating an explosion of economic growth in India and China that threatens the economic growth of the United States (Friedman, 2005). Situations like off-shoring and out sourcing have created competition in the global market place. In addition, the way in which the internet has caused some large companies to downsize and made it possible for various small companies to become large has changed the expectations of employers. Small companies have been able to use the internet as a tool for advertising so that their items can be sold and shipped all over the globe. Large companies have been able to replace employees with computers that are capable of completing the same tasks that people were once depended upon to complete. The manner and speed in which information can now be stored and transmitted has changed the way people do things in society. Public schools must continuously change in order to successfully prepare students for the Technological Age.

When schools experience a positive change, student academic performance begins to rise on state and local assessments and attendance improves as more students and teachers enjoy coming to school to learn and teach. Discipline problems decrease as more students become

engaged in the learning process and many choose to become less disruptive. On the contrary, when a school experiences a negative change, student academic performance begins to decline on state and local assessments. Attendance declines as more students and teachers make the choice to stay home rather than attend school. Discipline infractions increase as more students become disengaged from the learning process and choose to become disruptive throughout the school day.

The problem of education in general and the concerns of teacher education in particular must be examined with a sense of intellectual curiosity (O'Hair & Odell, 1995). It is important for us to learn to pose the right questions if we hope to uncover the right answers. We really must learn how to question our own questions, especially as they pertain to which instructional practices we should be using in our schools. Implementing research based instructional practices that will potentially help increase student achievement in school classrooms can be a daunting task for school leaders and teachers. School principals who are viewed by many as change facilitators often find themselves grappling with how to best implement changes that need to be made. The goal for many is to ensure that the changes that are being implemented become imbedded into the day-to-

day operation of the school. While some school leaders receive tremendous support and consider themselves to be on the cutting edge of positive change initiatives within their schools, other school leaders face critics who feel major restructuring in our schools is needed, not just modest improvements. Despite what some see as our desperate rush to reform however, evidence shows that little has changed inside U.S. classrooms (Stigler & Hiebert, 1999).

Researchers have learned much about the change process, but despite all that we know, most change initiatives fail (Senge, et al., 1999). This occurs because most all efforts to sustain significant change fail to address the root causes of what needs to be addressed in order to improve an organization. Most serious change initiatives eventually come up against issues embedded in our prevailing system of management. These include managers' commitment to change as long as it does not affect them; "undiscussable" topics that feel risky to talk about; and the ingrained habit of attacking symptoms and ignoring deeper, systemic causes of problems (Senge, 1999). For example, a school that does not achieve AYP may have a principal who lacks the leadership abilities necessary to create a positive school climate that research indicates is

necessary for increasing student performance and academic achievement.

Many change initiatives end due to their failure to produce the expected results in a manner that is quick enough to sustain the change effort. There must be a fundamental shift from the way traditional leaders think about change to more of a systems thinking approach. Potential leaders of any change initiative must first understand the nature of the growth processes and also how to support and encourage it. For example Lundin, Christensen, and Paul (2002) in their book *Fish Tales*, share real life stories that leaders can use to help transform their workplace and their lives. They suggest four specific strategies: Play (have a little fun at work), Make Their Day (engage others); Be There (actually pay attention); and, Choose Your Attitude (before you go to work). This educational resource is only one of the many books that can be used as a helpful tool for leaders wishing to implement change within their organizations.

Individuals involved with leading a change effort must also understand the challenges that may hinder progress. For example, the availability of resources needed to initiate change. Schools can seek grant funding

opportunities that can help provide the funding necessary to improve schools.

In order for change efforts to be sustained, a true model for effective leadership must be evident within the organization. Leadership theories considered leaders' importance in organizational climate development, subordinates' effectiveness, and job satisfaction.

Historical Beginnings of Transformational Leadership Theory

In 1973 Downton introduced transformational leadership which differentiated ordinary leaders from revolutionary leader (Wright, 2007). Burns and Zaleznick were two preliminary developers of transformational leadership in 1977 where they determined that managers considered their associates' needs and set goals accordingly. This theory was developed futher by Bass who believed transformational leaders developed subordinates' needs from lower to higher levels of maturity, achievement, autonomy, affiliation, and engaged subordinates to develop into leaders. Transformational leadership occurred if subordinates improved their organization on their own, intrinsically, or if their supervisors directed them, extrinsically. True transformation occurred when subordinates had a strong

intrinsic desire to change their organization. Consequently, transformational leaders built respect, vision, trust, and empowerment (Wright, 2007).

Definition of Transformational Leadership

Avolio and Bass (2004) defined transformational leadership as a process of influencing associates' priorities and inspiring them to anlyze themselves, their opportunities and challenges creatively. Research considering a relationship between transformational leadership and organizational climate added to the inventory or knowledge on how effective transformational leadership is in developing organizational climates.

Domains of Transformational Leadership Theory

Idealized Influence

Arousal, inspiration, and charisma are three primary attributes of Idealized Influence in which leaders develop vision of future accomplishments through extra personal effort, thus leading to development and achievement or subordiates' full potential (Wright, 2007). Conversely, leaders with too much charisma set their own agenda and subordinates will view them as idols. This is not

transformational leadership; it is too close to charismatic leadership in that leaders resist empowering subordinates because it is a threat to their own leadership.

Leaders with too little charisma affect organizational climate as well. Factors associated with this deficiency include leaders not focused on goals or vision, not respected and trusted by subordinates, and not mission oriented (Wright, 2007).

Inspirational Motivation

Transformational leaders provide motivation in which subordinates view goals, expectations, and mission accomplishments as obtainable (Wright, 2007). Motivation empowers subordinates' with power to accomplish a mission and to act on their own initiative even when no one is watching.

Intellectual Stimulation

Subordinates think about old problems creatively; question their own beliefs, assumptions, values, and those of their leaders that are outdated or inappropriate for solving current problems; and develop a capacity to solve future problems unforseen by leaders by being creative and innovative. Leaders are effective when their subordinates

are operating without their leader's presence or direct involvement (Wright, 2007).

Individual Consideration

This domain of transformational leadership means that leaders understand and share in subordinates' developmental needs and treat them as individuals rather than as a group. Leaders coach and mentor subordinates to maximize and develop their full potential (Wright, 2007).

Interaction of School Climate and Culture with Change, School Improvement, and Student Achievement

A school's culture and climate can interact with the school improvement change process in many ways and in all phases of that improvement process (Beach & Lindahl, 2004). The initial planning phase of the school improvement process involves identifying an organizational need and making a conscious decision whether to attempt to address that need. Both the climate and the culture can have considerable influence on the initial planning phase for change. For example, if the current climate of the school is one of high disengagement, high hindrance, and low spirit (Halpin & Croft, 1963), it is unlikely that the school will voluntarily opt to engage in a significant

school improvement process. If they are forced to, it is unlikely that the effort will succeed. Similarly, if the school's culture is one of cultural malaise (Deal & Kennedy, 1982), it is unlikely that the school improvement process will progress beyond this initial step. However, poor schools do change and that is what this study was designed to explore. The SES results helped the researcher to discover why schools improve and who is responsible for the improvements. Conversely, healthier school climates and more positive cultures with a history of successful organizational change often enhance the probability that the school will opt to move ahead with the plans for school improvement.

The nature of the changes inherent in the improvement process must be considered in the next step of the change process. The specific improvements and reforms being contemplated in the school improvement process must match those climates and cultures (Hopkins, Harris, Singleton, & Watts, 2000), because culture affects organizational behavior and performance, thereby shaping the impact and direction of changes (Kilman, Saxton, & Serpa, 1985). If the changes contemplated are not in alignment with the current culture and climate of the school, e.g., existing

customs, power structures etc., planned cultural intervention becomes necessary (Burke, 2002).

Beach and Lindahl (2004) stated that when change is contemplated in schools, certain key questions pertaining to the climate need to be asked including: How might the proposed change affect people's perceptions of the organizational climate? How great a change in climate is likely to be perceived as a consequence of implementing this change? Which aspects of this new climate might be perceived as becoming more positive, or more negative? How strongly might these changes in perceptions affect individuals? Which individuals?

The American Institutes for Research (2007) developed a school district survey for students and school staff and used it to conduct a study pertaining to school climate, connectedness, and student achievement on schools in Alaska. The data from the survey provided schools with information about how their students and staff perceive their school climate and how students perceived their connectedness to school each year. The results of the school climate and connectedness measures were compared annually with the achievement results of the Early Development's Standards Based Assessment (SBA) administered annually by the Alaska Department of Education. The

results show that, not only are several aspects of school climate and connectedness related to student achievement, but that *positive change* in school climate and connectedness is related to significant gains in student scores on statewide achievement tests.

Their findings moved beyond simply knowing that schools with good climate and connectedness are likely to have good achievement, and that schools with poor climate and connectedness are likely to have poor student achievement. Their results show that whether a school starts with high or low school climate and connectedness, and high or low achievement scores, *changing* that school's climate and connectedness for the better is associated with increases in student performance in reading writing and mathematics.

School climate plays a significant role during the implementation phase of change as schools struggle to achieve AYP as defined by NCLB. If the climate is healthy and positive in relation to the changes, implementation is facilitated. If the climate is dysfunctional or negative regarding the changes, motivation must be improved before it is likely that implementation and institutionalization of the change initiative will be successful (Beach & Lindahl, 2004).

School climate is an integral component of the school improvement process and should be carefully analyzed by any school official implementing changes with high hopes for achieving AYP. It affects decisions throughout all phases of the change process. In turn, it is affected by the decisions made in all phases of the change process (Beach & Lindahl, 2004). Although school climate may be complex enough to cause both contradictory and confusing discussions in the professional knowledge base, climate is a very real powerful force in schools. Leaders of school improvement can utilize the information gained through the assessment of a school's climate to help guide each phase of a change process. When this occurs, their chances of achieving adequate yearly progress as a result of increases in student achievement can be significantly increased. School climate information can be used to determine a school's readiness for change and for selecting the types of improvements most likely to be compatible with the school's climate, from implementing the improvements to ensuring that they become institutionalized (Beach, 1993).

There is a growing body of research, including Alaskan data that shows an association between positive school climate and academic achievement. School districts that

are intentionally focusing on both academic and school climate issues are seeing success (Klem & Connell, 2004).

Despite considerable discussion in the professional knowledge base as to how feasible it is to make significant changes in a school's climate, in some cases it is the climate, itself, which most needs to be changed if true school improvement is to occur (Beach & Lindahl, 2004). School principals can shape and develop climates that are supportive of the desired organizational changes needed for achieving AYP.

Brophy (1998) advocated creating an environment in schools in which students and teachers feel comfortable, valued and secure. This environment encourages school members to form positive emotional bonds with others and a positive attitude toward school, which in turn facilitates students' motivation to learn and success in learning (Pepper & Hamilton, 2001). A learning environment such as this would help to ensure that schools achieve adequate yearly progress.

Effective Schools Research

The large body of knowledge known as "Effective Schools Research" focuses on the role of principal as it relates to student achievement within the context of

poverty and diverse student backgrounds. The Effective Schools movement was started to distinguish schools from whose students achieved from those who failed to achieve (Gibbs, 1989).

Effective schools research began in 1966 when James Coleman wrote a report called the “Equal Educational Opportunity Survey” (EEOS), later known as “the Coleman Report,” which identified family background as the primary indicator of student achievement. They concluded that schooling was not an influence on student achievement (Hart, 2006).

Scholars in the field of education responded to Coleman’s claim with research studies that counter-balanced Coleman’s report and focused on the impact of schooling on student achievement. The research following the Coleman report concluded that for low SES schools, the school played a greater independent role than the student body variables (Hart, 2006). Ironically, Professor James Coleman instigated an entire movement in education that initiated improved practices in schools. One of the most important ideas in terms of public schooling became highly significant as a result of his claim that schools did not matter. Ron Edmonds spoke to a Harvard University audience in 1979 and stated that Coleman’s lasting contribution to

educational equity lies in his popularizing of pupil cognitive gain as the measure of school effectiveness (Hart, 2006).

While serving as the Director of the Center for Urban Studies at Harvard University, Ron Edmonds conducted research on effective schools. His research established that schools *did* matter in the lives of children (Hart, 2006).

Leadership Theory and Change

Bulach, Boothe, and Pickett (2006) studied various methods of measuring a principal's leadership behavior. They found that the best leadership style for an effective organization is one where the leader has a high task and a high people orientation which they referred to as a collaborative leadership style. The opinions of the authors were consistent with existing research that suggests a principal's human relations skills, their levels of trust and the way decisions are made, the failure to empower subordinates, and deal with conflict are often the reasons why principals are either successful or not as educational leaders who implement change.

Effective leadership can help improve school climate. Hoy, Tarter, and Kottkamp (1991) suggest that principals

create healthy school dynamics and a positive school climate by using leadership behaviors that will influence teachers in the school. A principal may influence the teaching staff by utilizing a style of leadership that is conducive to the school environment. Literature has documented that the principal's leadership style is a significant factor in determining the climate of the school (Clabough, 2006). For example, Hall and Hord (2001) identified three change facilitator styles: the Initiator, the Manager, and the Responder. The school Principal with the Initiator style of leadership acts as the motivator who strives to maintain a positive school climate and continually articulates what the school can become.

Letcher (2006) found that the building principal is extremely important when looking at school climate. Her research describes the affects that the Principal has on how the school operates. She concludes in her study that the relationship the principal fosters with people working in the school affects the morale of the teachers and the students.

Bulach, Boothe, and Michael (2000) investigated supervisory behaviors that affect school climate and found that teachers should be trusted and involved in the decision making process. Their research indicated strongly

that principals need to listen to their teachers. Some principals do listen in an attempt to try and create a climate in which people want to do their best. Others assess each teacher's strengths through listening and observing and use what they learn to get the best out of each individual. Still others promote confidence and optimistic attitudes and become someone that people like working for and with.

Gordon (2003) believes that principals make a difference because they have everything to do with determining the climate of the school. When parents say that a school is friendly, warm, and child-centered, it is because the principal has set the tone from the top (Gordon, 2003). It is important for the principal to demonstrate a set of attributes that combine both instructional leader and manager. Letcher (2006) defines the primary responsibility of the principal as his/her ability to support and encourage teachers to embrace new and innovative strategies of instruction. When this occurs relationships begin to develop and trust becomes the key element needed for change initiatives to commence.

Kimball (1985) surveyed 1,294 teachers in 94 schools to determine if principal leadership and school climate explained schools that varied on CAT reading and math

achievement. A regression analysis revealed that higher-achieving schools have significantly higher teacher ratings on school climate and principal leadership than do lower achieving schools. In addition, the correlations for Kimball's entire sample were positive, indicating that the higher achieving schools tended to be the ones where principals had high (mean) survey ratings, and where teachers were relatively cohesive or likeminded regarding their principal and school climate. The largest factor in the analysis of mean survey responses was a measure of the principal as an effective interpersonal leader who commands the respect and support of the school staff. There are many studies like Kimball's that link principal leadership and school climate variables to student achievement (Cantwell, 2003).

Lemoine (2004) indicated through her research that a school's climate will determine its effectiveness on academic achievement. She noted that the importance of school climate as it relates to school effectiveness should not be underestimated because it has a direct impact on the attitude that students and teachers have about school. Schools are under tremendous pressure from state accountability standards to show improvements in behavioral stability along with academic achievements (Lemoine, 2004).

Researchers from the Yale Child Study Center and School Development Program (Haynes, et al., 2001) theorize that a school is an ecological system in which behavior, attitude, and achievement levels of students reflect the school's climate.

McKinsey (2002) found that teachers' professional commitment and organizational commitment were both associated with school climate. Specifically, teacher commitment was greater in schools characterized by high levels of administrative support and teacher collegiality. Schools with positive climate conditions were likely to have teachers who were committed to the profession and to the goals and values of their school. Additionally, most educators believe that the school's atmosphere influences a student's personal development, motivation, and academic performance (McKinsey, 2002).

The principal plays a critical role in leading a school through a period of intense change (Fouts, 2000). Some researchers attempted to identify the changes that were necessary before a new principal would agree to serve in a struggling school. Fauts (2000) believed that teachers' resistance to change was a significant problem. Many teachers resist change simply because they are not consulted throughout the change process. Teachers who are

invited to share in the decision making process are more likely to embrace the change efforts. Mason (2005) believed that it takes only a few teachers in a school to incapacitate reform efforts, and the inability of the principal to transfer those teachers out of the building significantly restricts the progress that can be made in addressing issues of reform.

There are many established practices from past eras that are engrained throughout the public schools. The practices are embedded so deeply within the school culture that they resist the forces of change that are necessary (Schwan & Spady, 2006). School principals must think in terms of standards, achievement, purposes, ends, learning, and results rather than terms like time, programs, procedures, means, teaching, and resources which were thought of during the Bureaucratic Age.

The manner in which some schools operate like an assembly line with students and teachers moving through the curriculum at a uniform rate for a prescribed amount of time was introduced throughout the Industrial Age. Most schools still operate from September to June on an Agrarian Age calendar. Everything is defined by the calendar including opportunity, access to instruction, grade levels, curriculum, credit, reporting systems, teaching assignments

and contracts. In addition, a Feudal Age agenda of sorting and selecting the faster from the slower, the academic from the practical, and the motivated from the uninspired, all under the assumption that only some students can learn the hard stuff (Schwahn & Spady, 2006). Organizational change may indeed be impeded by the nature of this structure as it becomes engrained in the culture. Many individuals working within schools actually begin to view certain aspects of this structure as ritual. For example, many teachers believe that student performance must be reported as letter grades on a report card because parents expect it that way.

Fouts (2000) believed the findings have important implications for policy makers shaping the states efforts to reform public education. The researcher suggests that changes in law, policy, and conditions in school are needed, including: state and local school district's recognition that there are multiple factors which inhibit or slow school change. In addition, he believes that efforts to move toward a standards-based system that includes accountability and clear goals for student learning must be multifaceted in approach and systematic in nature.

Malak (2002) stated that organizations change only when the people in them are willing and able to do so. An

important factor that is needed to successfully implement change is establishing and cultivating a climate of trust (Robbins & Alvy, 1995). Staff members must feel safe and comfortable taking risks if they are expected to try new ideas, utilize new materials, or change their behaviors. When changes are made, performance frequently declines initially before it begins to improve (Robbins & Alvy, 1995). For example, when a school that uses a traditional math program designed around drill and practice adopts a new math program that integrates problem solving and concept development, a decrease in student performance may become apparent on local assessments while professional development initiatives are initiated. Eventually, student performance indicators begin to improve as teachers become more comfortable and confident with the program changes.

Change can be implemented, but it cannot be sustained if the school or district has a toxic culture (Fullan, 2001). The school principal is the group's emotional guide and has the power to affect the entire school's emotions (Goleman, 2002). Goleman(2002) refers to resonance as the principal's ability to provide a supportive environment and bring out the best in everyone. In addition, he defines dissonance as the opposite effect that principals create when the environment is negative. Success of a building

principal depends on their understanding the emotions of others and realizing the power of emotions in the work place (Lada, 2006).

Effective school principals know that there are alternatives to the archaic collection of self-limiting, counter-productive features that have become engrained in public schools. For example, traditional lessons which are introduced consistently through work sheets, drill, and practice must be replaced with authentic lessons that promote higher level thinking, application, and concept development. Principal leaders also know that with today's technologies and information systems anyone can learn anything at any time from anywhere. Designing and implementing an effective Information Age learning system takes place through the communication of ideas to the minds of others (Gardner, 1995). One of the most important ideas that school leaders should communicate is the significance of ensuring that curriculum, instruction, and assessment are in complete alignment within their schools. Many teachers have moved away from the perception of their students as having fixed levels of ability (Fullan, 2005).

Leading with love is essential for the people in the organization and for the journey they are taking. John Wooden (2005) stated that a leader who tries to lead

without love will turn around one day and find there is nobody following. The family will have disappeared. Strong organizations are those that can be identified by having an extraordinary bond within. People working within the organization put their heart into their work and into those they are working with each day. It is the leaders who make the organization great. Both Principal Leaders and Teacher Leaders directly impact the quality of the learning that takes place in the school. Uncommon strength and resiliency can be identified within schools where the principal and teachers lead with love. Schools with a strong sense of family identified through love, also involve good structure, sensible discipline, and personal sacrifice. It is the small considerations that often mean the most. Genuine expressions of interest or concern, individual recognition, and a helpful hand by a school leader can help build successful relationships that are essential for helping to strengthen a learning organization. Principals must remember that they can become the catalyst for change in their buildings if they start with one or two small projects and model their vision (Whitaker & Whitaker, 2002).

Jim Collins, in *Good To Great* describes the importance of Level 5 leadership and how Level 5 leaders channel their

ego needs away from themselves and into the larger goal of building a great company (Collins, 2001). A Principal therefore, must work closely with his or her staff members to clearly define what the needs of each member are as they relate to school improvement so that effective strategies can be implemented which will help improve the quality of instruction that students receive each school day. Collins defines Level 5 leaders as modest, willful, humble, and fearless. Level 5 Leadership is not about being “soft” or “nice” or purely “inclusive” or “census building.” The whole point of Level 5 is to make sure the *right* decisions happen--no matter how difficult or painful--for the long term greatness of the institution and the achievement of its mission, independent of consensus or popularity (Collins, 2005). He concludes that CEO’s who have taken their companies from good-to great have done so by possessing these same qualities. In addition, he identified the key to success of any organization is to have all members of the organization understand what the organization can be the best in the world at and he refers to this as the Hedgehog Concept. It was Peter Drucker (1999) who cautioned that the foundation for doing good is doing well and Collins added that the foundation for doing well lies in a relentless focus on the Hedgehog Concept.

Building a great institution involves no single defining action. Research indicates that it is like pushing a giant, heavy fly wheel. Each turn builds upon work done previously and once the fly wheel starts spinning, it eventually begins flying forward with unstoppable momentum (Collins, 2005). The power of the fly wheel is that success breeds support and commitment, which breeds even greater success, which breeds more commitment and the cycle continues. Once this happens, more and more people join in because people like to support winners. Ultimately, greatness becomes largely a matter of conscious choice, and discipline.

It is important for leaders to understand what many would-be leaders never appreciate. Position power is very important, but it is never really enough. Organizations are networks and the power of relationships is a crucial complement to the power of position (Bolman & Deal, 2006). When school leaders switch from wearing their wizard hat to wearing their warrior hat, they must always remember that people come first and they are the most important resource that the organization contains. Effective leaders must also recognize that character, or soul, is a moral compass that points to the right direction in the absence of other clues. Leaders who have a highly developed sense of

ethical intuition can be relied upon to act appropriately in any situation.

In productive work communities, leaders are not commanders and controllers, bosses and big shots. Instead, they are servers and supporters, partners and providers (Kouzes & Posner, 1993). Thinking about leadership in this way helps to develop and create shared visions and understandings within organizations. Like Gareth Morgan (1993) stated in his book *Imaginization: The Art of Creative Management*, "We can't hope to create new organizational forms in old ways" (p. 10). That is why it is important for leaders to recognize that there is not an expectation that they be superhuman, all-seeing, and all knowing like a wizard. Instead, they need to recognize that people willingly follow the direction of someone who is attuned to their aims and aspirations, worries and fears, ideals and images. In addition, it is important to point out that loyalty is not something that a boss can demand. It is something that the people within the organization choose to grant to a leader who has earned it.

The goals of NCLB are to improve achievement for all students, to enhance equity, and to ensure more qualified teachers. Its complex regulations however, for showing AYP toward test scores targets aimed at 100% proficiency within

ten years have created a bizarre situation in which most of the nation's public schools will be deemed failing within the next few years--even many that already score high and those that are steadily improving from year to year (Meier, Kohn, Darling-Hammond, Sizer, & Wood, 1993). A study to identify the positive attributes of effective school climates that may assist educational leaders with their journey to seek and maintain AYP can be both inspirational and enlightening.

If however, a positive school climate helps increase the chances that schools will meet the expectations set by the federal government for making AYP each year, then building and maintaining a positive school climate should be a school leader's top priority.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

With the ever-increasing demands for accountability at the school level as a result of the *No Child Left* Behind (NCLB) federal legislation, school principals have to keep the climate in their buildings in the forefront of their minds. As the teachers in their schools work hard to identify strategies that they can implement to assist them as they struggle to achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), many educators find themselves frustrated and unappreciated. At a time when the focus is on improvement of our educational system, and teachers have been under the lens of public scrutiny and criticism more than ever, it has become more critical to understand the relationships between the various factors that contribute to effectiveness in schools. The purpose of this quantitative study will be to understand the relationship between school climate and the AYP that schools are expected to achieve each year. Six middle schools that made AYP within the state of Pennsylvania during the 2006-2007 school year after not making AYP during the three previous school years was compared with five middle schools that have failed to

make AYP for four consecutive years and were consequently placed on a list for school improvement by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

It has become increasingly apparent that, with the amount of accountability being placed on schools as a result of the expectations and requirements of AYP with NCLB, more and more classroom teachers are feeling pressure and stress. This added level of stress, as teachers work toward school improvement efforts to achieve AYP, may directly impact the climate for learning within the organization. This study will explore the factors related to school climate that may or may not impact a school's ability to achieve AYP. In addition, it will analyze the relationship of AYP and the impact that it may be having on school climate within middle schools throughout Pennsylvania.

Research Design

This study used a School Ecology Survey (SES) to determine teachers' perceptions of the climate of their school. The central question of the study was to determine if there is a difference in school climate between five middle schools that did not achieve AYP for four consecutive years and six middle schools that did not

achieve AYP for three consecutive years but did achieve AYP in the fourth year. The climate in each middle school was measured using the SES created by Gene E. Hall and the Concerns Based Systems International. The SES was used to identify whether the teachers' perceptions differ in each school. Gene Hall's SES was specifically selected for use in this study because it provided the researcher with a valid and reliable instrument that would identify the climate in each school.

Validation of Hall's School Ecology Survey

The SES was utilized by the researcher for this study because of the extensive work that was completed by the survey's creator, Dr. Gene Hall, to validate the instrument. Hall used the SES to assess the psychological climate in both district and school surveys. The variables in the SES had been shown by previous research to be internally consistent, psychologically meaningful measures of the work environment (James & Jones, 1979). The questionnaire has been used and validated in studies of the perceptions of the climate of firefighters, navy midshipmen, and health care professionals. The sub-categories represent characteristics of an individual's job

and role, workgroup, organization, and the leadership of the supervisor.

Items for the SES were drawn from the Organizational Climate Questionnaire (James, 1980), DDAE/Criteria (Culvart & Hoban, 1973), Building Questionnaire (DESSI, 1979), Trouble Shooting Checklist (Manning, 1976), and School Climate Questionnaire (Fox, 1974). The items from these various questionnaires were initially sorted by sub-categories. The Organizational Climate Questionnaire had already been sorted by James and Jones (1979) during validation of the instrument, and these scales were maintained. All of James and Jones' staff members were asked to look at the definition of each sub-category and choose the five items that she/he felt would be the best measures of that definition. The entire staff met to come to consensus on five items per scale. The prototype SES questionnaire was finalized and administered to teachers.

An initial factor analysis was performed by Gene Hall on 85 survey items covering 17 school variables that these items were thought to measure. Based on this factor analysis 22 individual items were eliminated and 4 items were transferred to categories that were more applicable. The items in these two categories, Leader Upward Interaction and Job Pressure, did not consistently fall

into the targeted category or any other category; the decision was made to write new items for these two categories.

Several tests were done on the remaining 56 items/15 categories. First, Hall assigned schools to individual staff members (researchers) and had each staff member rate how they thought the teachers in their assigned school would respond to the SES variables. Each staff member used a three point scale and referred to the James and Jones (1979) definitions of the categories. The researchers considered the task difficult. On a school-by-school correlation the researcher rankings compared to actual responses, five researchers reached significant agreement with the aggregated school scores on a 2-tail probability test (See Table 1).

Using a correlation formula between researcher judgment and teacher responses on each category, the researcher/response correlations were significant on categories 3, 11, 12, 13, 16, and 17 ranged from .680 to .894 (See Table 2). The correlations on variables, 6, 7, 8, and 14 ranged from .582 to .641, showing a significant correlation at a 10% probability level.

In addition to Hall's validity results, the researcher further established content validity of this survey through

input from a panel of experts consisting of seven school district superintendents who have experience with school climate indicators. The total experience of this expert panel exceeds 200 years working in public education. The following is a list of the expert panel members (School Superintendents) by school district:

Table 1

Research-School Validity Correlations by Site

School	Corr	Prob
1	.638	.007
2	.350	.110
3	.648	.006
4	-.018	.476
5	.446	.055
6	.533	.025
7	.787	.001
8	.541	.023
9	.277	.169

Table 2

Research-School Validity Correlations by Variable

Category		Corr	2-Tail Prob
1,2	Role Ambiguity/Conflict	.260	.485
3	Job Autonomy	.894	.001
4	Job Importance	-.006	.998
6	Leader Support	.641	.063
7	Leader Goal Emphasis	.582	.100
8	Leader Work Facilitation	.635	.066
9	Leader Inter. Facilitation	.549	.126
11	Leader Conf. & Trust in Teach	.691	.039
12	Workgroup Coop, Friendliness	.869	.002
13	Openness of Expression	.680	.044
14	Esprit de Corps	.632	.068
15	Planning & Effectiveness	.195	.615
16	Decision-Making Characteristics	.847	.004
17	Student Characteristics	.725	.027

Cambria Heights School District: Dr. Joseph Macharola;

Northern Cambria School District: Dr. Thomas Estep;

Central Cambria School District: Dr. Susan Makosy;

Portage Area School District: Mr. Richard Bernazolli;

Penn Cambria School District: Mrs. Marybeth Whited;

Blacklick Valley School District: Dr. Donald Thomas; and,

Conemaugh Valley School District: Mr. William Rushin.

Input was gathered from the expert panel using a School Ecology Item Analysis. Each of the school superintendents on the expert panel received a letter which invited them to complete the School Ecology Item Analysis. The expert panel was asked to indicate whether each question in the 16 categories ranging from role conflict to student characteristics contained either “vital information,” “adequate information,” or “not much here.” Any SES question that was identified by three or more expert panel members as “not much here” were eliminated. Only one question (#68) was recommended by two panel experts as “not much here.” Questions 1-11 in the pilot study pertained to demographics. The results of the additional SES Pilot Study Questions are listed in Table 3.

Table 3

Results of the School Ecology Survey Additional Pilot Study

SES Question Number	Percentage of Expert Votes Not Much Here	Percentage of Expert Votes Adequate	Percentage of Expert Votes Vital Info.
12	0%	40%	60%
13	0%	15%	85%
14	14%	43%	43%
15	0%	29%	71%
16	14%	29%	57%
17	0%	71%	29%
18	0%	15%	85%
19	0%	29%	71%
20	14%	29%	57%
21	14%	57%	29%
22	0%	15%	85%
23	0%	29%	71%
24	0%	15%	85%
25	0%	15%	85%
26	14%	29%	57%
27	0%	40%	60%
28	0%	0%	100%
29	0%	60%	40%
30	0%	60%	40%
31	0%	0%	100%
32	14%	43%	43%
33	0%	0%	100%
34	0%	71%	29%
35	14%	14%	72%
36	0%	15%	85%
37	0%	15%	85%
38	0%	15%	85%
39	0%	60%	40%
40	0%	40%	60%
41	0%	40%	60%
42	0%	29%	71%
43	0%	40%	60%
44	15%	0%	85%

Table 3 (continued)

Results of the School Ecology Survey Additional Pilot Study

SES Question Number	Percentage of Expert Votes Not Much Here	Percentage of Expert Votes Adequate	Percentage of Expert Votes Vital Info.
45	0%	40%	60%
46	0%	15%	85%
47	0%	60%	40%
48	14%	29%	57%
49	0%	71%	29%
50	0%	29%	71%
51	0%	29%	71%
52	0%	40%	60%
53	0%	0%	100%
54	0%	15%	85%
55	0%	29%	71%
56	14%	57%	29%
57	0%	29%	71%
58	0%	29%	71%
59	0%	29%	71%
60	0%	15%	85%
61	0%	15%	85%
62	0%	15%	85%
63	0%	15%	85%
64	0%	29%	71%
65	0%	40%	60%
66	14%	29%	57%
67	0%	29%	71%
68	29%	29%	42%
69	0%	0%	100%
70	14%	43%	43%
71	0%	15%	85%
72	0%	15%	85%
73	14%	29%	57%
74	0%	15%	85%
75	0%	15%	85%
76	0%	0%	100%
77	0%	29%	71%

The feedback provided by the Panel of Experts indicated that the SES has content validity for assessing the climate of a school. The minimum percentage of votes received for each item in the Adequate to Vital Information range was 86%. One item (#68) received only 71% of the votes in the Adequate to Vital Information range. Six of the SES items voted on by the Expert Panel received 100% of the votes indicating that the information received was vital to the organization. Eighty percent of the SES items however, received 100% of the votes in the Adequate to Vital Information ranges which indicates that the items included on the SES have content validity for evaluating school climate.

Reliability of Hall's School Ecology Survey

The SES was tested by Hall to check for internal consistency. A factor analysis was executed on 13 categories (categories 1 and 2 were combined; category 17 was not done because it had two acceptable items). Reliability estimates (coefficient alpha)for these variables range from .59 to .91 (Table 4). Hall found that the SES has a conceptually sound structure with 54 items measuring 16 categories.

Table 4

Internal Reliability by Variable

Category	Correlation
Role Ambiguity & Conflict	.59
Job Autonomy	.77
Job Importance	.74
Leader Support	.77
Leader Goal Emphasis	.73
Leader Work Facilitation	.84
Leader Interaction Facilitation	.75
Leader Conf. & Trust in Teachers	.82
Workgroup Cooperation, Friendliness, Warmth	.86
Openness of Expression	.91
Esprit de Corps	.77
Planning and Effectiveness	.68
Decision-Making Characteristics	.89

An additional pilot study was conducted by the researcher with middle school teachers at the Bellwood Antis Middle School in Bellwood, Pennsylvania to further establish reliability for the SES. Permission to pilot and use the SES was obtained from Dr. Gene E. Hall prior to initiating the pilot study. The pilot study was conducted to further establish reliability for the survey questions in each of the 16 domains included in the SES. The pilot SES was administered electronically on-line to 30 middle school teachers from the Bellwood Antis Middle School in Bellwood, Pennsylvania. A factor analysis was completed at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Applied Research Lab (ARL).

Each item on the 67-item SES was ranked by the Bellwood Antis Middle School teachers using a Likert Scale using the following three response foils to describe the degree to which the teacher perceives climate issues:

- 1, Strongly Disagree, to 5, Strongly Agree;
- 1, Not At All, to 5, A Great Deal; and,
- 1, Never, to 5, Almost Always.

An analysis of the reliability was done for all of the questions on the survey and for the questions in each subcategory using Cronbach's Alpha (Table 5). The Cronbach's Alpha Test measuring the average correlations of

Table 5

Results of the Cronbach Alpha Test

	Category	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Role Conflict	.690
2	Job Autonomy	.765
3	Job Importance	.660
4	Job Pressure	.920
5	Leader Support	.903
6	Leader Goal Emphasis	.613
7	Leader Work Facilitation	.815
8	Leader Interaction Facilitation	.567
9	Leader Upward Interaction	.831
10	Leader Confidence and Trust	.728
11	Workgroup Cooperation	.805
12	Openness of Expression	.896
13	Esprit de Corps	.711
14	Planning and Effectiveness	.831
15	Decision-Making Characteristics	.856
16	Student Characteristics	.757
All	Question	.931

items for the same construct and the test resulted in an overall score for all questions of .931. The Cronbach's Alpha for the 16 categories ranged from .56 to .92.

The pilot study indicated that the reliability statistics for the questions were acceptable based on the results of the Cronbach's Alpha Test (See Table 5).

The .931 reliability results of the SES pilot study for all categories at Bellwood Middle School indicated that the SES instrument is a reliable tool for evaluating school climate.

The data from the 30 participants who responded to the researcher's internal reliability pilot study were crossed referenced with Hall's check for internal consistency in which 458 participants responded. The results indicated that there appears to be similarities between the reliability coefficients found by both Hall and the researcher. Through comparison analysis of the factors in each category, six categories appeared to match what Hall had found. The researcher found higher reliability correlations than Hall in three categories: Role Conflict; Leader Support; Planning; and, Effectiveness. Four categories however, resulted in lower reliability correlations than Hall reported: Job Importance; Leader Goal Emphasis; Leader Interaction Facilitation; and, Leader

Confidence and Trust in Teachers. The comparison analysis of reliability in each category for both Hall's findings and the researcher's pilot study further indicated that the SES instrument is a reliable tool for evaluating school climate.

The SES was used to complete an initial first-phase analysis of the statistical relationships between school climate and AYP. In addition, a second phase analysis was completed to identify whether the teachers' perceptions in each category differ in five middle schools in Pennsylvania that did not achieve AYP for four consecutive years and six middle schools that did not achieve AYP for three consecutive years but did achieve AYP in the fourth year.

Purpose

For the purposes of this research, the following general research questions and their related sub questions were examined:

1. Is there a difference in school climate between five middle schools in Pennsylvania that did not achieve AYP for four consecutive years with six middle schools in Pennsylvania that did not achieve AYP for three consecutive years but did achieve AYP in the

fourth year as defined by Gene Hall’s School Ecology Survey (SES)?

Sub questions:

a. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions between these two types of schools in terms of Role Conflict?
b. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions between these two types of schools in terms of Job Autonomy?
c. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions between these two types of schools in terms of Job Importance?
d. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions between these two types of schools in terms of Job Pressure?
e. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions between these two types of schools in terms of Leader Support?
f. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions between these two types of schools in terms of Leader Goal Emphasis?
g. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions between these two types of schools in terms of Leader Work Facilitation?

h. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions between these two types of schools in terms of Leader Interaction Facilitation?
i. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions between these two types of schools in terms of Leader Upward Interaction?
j. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions between these two types of schools in terms of Leader Confidence and Trust?
k. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions between these two types of schools in terms of Workgroup Cooperation, Friendliness, and Warmth?
l. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions between these two types of schools in terms of Openness of Expression?
m. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions between these two types of schools in terms of Esprit de Corps?
n. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions between these two types of schools in terms of Planning and Effectiveness?

o. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions between these two types of schools in terms of Decision-Making Characteristics?
p. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions between these two types of schools in terms of Student Characteristics?

Population and Sample

This study surveyed 11 Pennsylvania middle schools that have and have not made AYP as defined by the federal NCLB legislation and required by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Six rural/suburban middle schools in Pennsylvania that have achieved AYP status in 2006-2007 but did not achieve AYP in the three years prior and five middle schools in Pennsylvania that have not achieved AYP for four years were purposefully selected and invited to participate in this study. Through an analysis of survey responses, this research determined whether climate varies across schools. An understanding of those relationships among schools will be helpful in developing strategies for school improvement. This research on school climate may assist principals and teachers as they search for strategies that will help them to achieve AYP.

The SES created by Gene E. Hall was used to evaluate the climate within each school. Each of the research questions was cross referenced on a table to ensure that the survey questions did in fact answer the questions stated in the research study.

All 11 of the rural and/or suburban middle schools selected for this study were identified from a current list of schools archived on the Pennsylvania Department of Education's (PDE's) web site. Each year the list is updated and published. Their web site includes every school in Pennsylvania that is reported to have either achieved AYP or not. This web site list was used to identify six middle schools in Pennsylvania that have achieved AYP status in 2006-2007 but did not achieve AYP in the three years prior and five middle schools that have not achieved AYP for four years as defined by the NCLB federal legislation. Information pertaining to each of the 20 middle schools that are selected and agree to participate in the study was based on the following information:

1. Size;
2. Number of teachers; and,
3. Location: Urban, Suburban, Rural.

Achieved AYP for Four Consecutive Years	Did not Achieve AYP for First Three Years but Did in Year Four
School #	School #
Population/Size:	Population/Size:
# of Teachers:	# of Teachers:
Location:	Location:

Two lists of middle schools in Pennsylvania were created based on the data archived from PDE's web site. Thirty-four middle schools were identified that did not achieve AYP for four consecutive years and were placed on the first list. Nineteen middle schools were identified that did not achieve AYP for the first three years but did achieve AYP in year four and were placed on the second list. All of the middle schools from each list were invited to participate in this research study.

A letter was mailed to the superintendent of each school district with a middle school that meets the AYP criteria necessary to participate in this study. The letter asked permission to conduct this research at their middle school in an attempt to secure an adequate population for the study. Included in the correspondence was a description of the proposed study, the

Superintendent's Informed Consent Form and a copy of the survey. The introductory letter invited the school to participate in the study, requesting that a signed approval or disapproval of intent to participate be returned to the researcher. A stamped self-addressed envelope was included with each superintendent's packet. A follow-up phone call to each superintendent was also made by the researcher to encourage participation although participation was strictly voluntary. In addition, a bright yellow hand with fingers crossed and an attached lottery ticket with a note was mailed to each superintendent so that an adequate population of middle school teachers would be included in the study. Additional phone calls were placed to superintendents and flowers were sent to the superintendent's secretary in two school districts to encourage approval and participation. The flowers helped to motivate and encourage one school district to participate but had absolutely no impact on the other school district.

Upon superintendent approval to permit the teachers from the selected middle school in their district to participate, the researcher placed a phone call to the principal of each building to explain the purpose of the study and to invite them to have their teachers

participate. In addition, an introductory letter describing the study, a copy of the signed superintendent's consent form, and a request to have the principal email a list of their teachers' email addresses to the Applied Research Lab at Indiana University of Pennsylvania was mailed to each middle school principal. A response rate of 60% was the initial target for this study. Furthermore, in an effort to reach this target, superintendents, principals, and teachers were informed that their school could receive an assortment of books for their school library (a $500.00 value) if their school is determined to have the highest percentage return rate for this research study. The actual response rate was 31.9%. Each middle school principal was contacted via email by the researcher in an attempt to encourage participation. Postcards for each teacher were created and mailed in bundles to each middle school with postage placed on each individual postcard. Each middle school was contacted via telephone and the secretary at each school was asked to attach an address label on each postcard for each teacher once they received the postcards. In addition, the secretaries were asked to place the postcards in the U.S. Mail so that each teacher would receive the invitation to go on-line and take the survey during their summer break. In addition, the

researcher phoned a pizza shop in one of the school districts and had lunch delivered to the faculty. A request was made by the researcher to have the pizza delivery person record a hand written note on the top of each pizza box that would help motivate and encourage teachers in that school to go on-line and take the survey.

The following demographic questions were added to the beginning of the *School Ecology Survey* under the Background Information heading:

1. Gender
2. Age:
    a. Under 25
    b. 25-45
    c. 46 or older
3. Years of Teaching at this School
    a. My First Year
    b. 2-10 years
    c. 11-20 years
    d. 21 or more years
4. Race
    a. Asian
    b. African-American/Black
    c. Hispanic/Latino

d. White

e. Other

5. Location

a. Rural

b. Suburban

c. Urban

Treatment of the Data

Analysis of variance and chi-square was used to analyze the data. The SES questions were grouped into 16 sub-categories (ranging from Role Conflict to Student Characteristics) and teacher responses were compared individually and by sub-category for the AYP+ and AYP- schools chosen for comparison. The sub-categories represent a set of questions grouped together based around a common content focus. The 16 sub-categories represented on the SES include: Role Conflict, Job Autonomy, Job Importance, Job Pressure, Leader Support, Leader Goal Emphasis, Leader Work Facilitation, Leader Interaction Facilitation, Leader Upward Interaction, Leader Confidence and Trust, Workgroup Cooperation Friendliness and Warmth, Openness of Expression, Esprit de Corps, Planning and Effectiveness, Decision-Making Characteristics, and Student Characteristics.

Data Analysis using ANOVA

A one-way ANOVA was completed to determine whether significant differences existed between the mean scores for the Overall Climate and each of the 16 sub-categories in the AYP+ and AYP- schools. In addition, a two-way ANOVA was conducted by the researcher to analyze overall and sub-category scores by type of school and gender. Then, a two-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if a significant difference existed between AYP+ schools, AYP- schools, and years of teaching at the school. If an interaction was found in the data through two-way AOV, then the Tukey-Wallace HSD was used as a follow-up analysis of the data. Finally, two-way ANOVAs were conducted by the researcher to analyze if a significant difference existed between AYP+ schools, AYP- schools, among rural, urban and suburban schools.

Data Analysis using Chi-Square

A chi-square analysis was completed on each of the 67 survey statements to determine whether any of them revealed significant differences between the AYP+ and AYP- schools. A second chi-square analysis was conducted to determine whether significant differences existed between AYP+ and AYP- schools, gender, and the 67 survey items. Finally, a

third chi-square analysis was conducted to determine whether or not significant differences existed between AYP+ and AYP- schools, years of teaching in the school, and the 67 survey items.

Summary

Five of the 11 rural or suburban middle schools that were randomly selected to participate in this study were chosen because they did not make AYP for four years as defined by the NCLB federal legislation. The other six rural or suburban middle schools that were selected to participate in this study were chosen because they did achieve AYP in 2006-2007, but did not achieve AYP in the three years prior.

It was the purpose of this study to analyze the climate within the school and to gain an understanding of the relationship between the school's ability to achieve AYP and the climate within the school. Gene E. Hall's SES was used to gather the data. The data was analyzed using one-way and two-way ANOVA and chi-square analysis to provide answers to the general research questions about the relationships between school climate and AYP.

CHAPTER IV

DATA AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

This study was designed to compare teachers' perceptions of school climate of five middle schools in Pennsylvania that did not achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) during a four year time span with six middle schools in Pennsylvania that finally did achieve AYP in the last year of a four-year time span.

The School Ecology Survey (SES) was created by Dr. Gene Hall to measure school climate and adapted by the researcher to survey the climate within each middle school that participated in the study. For the remainder of the data review and analysis in this chapter, schools that did not achieve AYP for four years are identified as AYP- schools and schools that did not achieve AYP for three years but then finally did in the fourth year are identified as AYP+ schools.

The following research question was addressed: Is there a difference in school climate between five middle schools in Pennsylvania that did not achieve AYP for four consecutive years with six middle schools in Pennsylvania that did not achieve AYP for three consecutive years but

did achieve AYP in the fourth year? In addition, analysis focused on 16 survey sub-categories. Six of the sub-categories related to teacher job satisfaction including: Role Conflict; Job Autonomy; Importance; Pressure; Work Group Cooperation; and, Esprit de Corps. Nine additional sub-categories related to how the principal influences the working climate and are identified as: Leader Support; Goal Emphasis; Work and Interaction Facilitation; Upward Interaction; Trust; Openness of Expression; Decision Making; and, Planning Effectiveness. The final sub-category related to how teachers interact with students.

Sample Population

The sample population for this study included 574 teachers from 11 public middle schools across Pennsylvania. One hundred sixty-seven teachers completed the entire SES for a response rate of 29.1%.

Table 6 provides an overview of the demographic information of the participants in this study including gender, age, number of years teaching at the school, race, and whether the school was identified as rural, suburban, or urban.

Table 6

An Overall Descriptive Analysis of Demographics

Demographics	AYP+ Number	AYP+ Percent	AYP- Number	AYP- Percent	Total Number	Total Percent
GENDER:						
Male	25	31.2%	25	34.2%	50	32.7%
Female	55	68.8%	48	65.8%	103	67.3%
AGE:						
Under 25	7	8.8%	4	5.5%	11	7.2%
25-45	44	55.0%	51	69.9%	95	62.1%
46/older	29	36.2%	18	24.7%	47	30.7%
YEARS TEACHING AT SCHOOL:						
1ST YEAR	12	15.0%	6	8.2%	18	11.8%
2-10 YRS	48	60.0%	43	58.9%	91	59.5%
11-20 YRS	13	16.2%	12	16.4%	25	16.3%
21/MORE	7	8.8%	12	16.4%	19	12.4%
RACE:						
Asian	0	0.0%	2	2.7%	2	1.3%
Afr American	1	1.2%	1	1.4%	2	1.3%
His American	3	3.8%	0	0.0%	3	2.0%
White	74	92.5%	70	95.9%	14	94.1%
Other	2	2.5%	0	0.0%	2	1.3%
SCHOOL:						
Rural	35	43.8%	13	17.8%	48	31.4%
Suburban	8	10.0%	27	37.8%	35	22.9%
Urban	37	46.2%	33	45.2%	70	45.8%

Note. *p<.05.

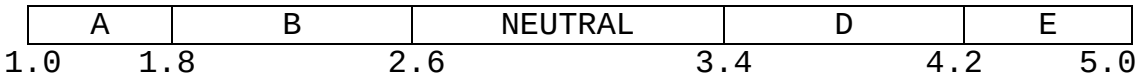
A one-way ANOVA revealed no significant differences between the mean scores for the Overall Climate and each of the 16 sub-categories in the AYP+ and AYP- schools (Table 7). Although no statistical significant difference was found between the means in each sub-category for the AYP+ and AYP- schools, slightly more positive means can be seen in some sub-categories in the AYP+ schools.

A scale with a range from very negative to very positive was created in Figure 1 to illustrate how to interpret the mean scores from very negative to very positive. This pictorial range of mean attitude scores help the reader see more precisely whether attitude scores are negative, neutral, or positive. Mean scores located on the attitude scale in the “A” range between 1.0 and 1.7 represent of a very negative attitude. Mean scores located on the scale in the “B” range between 1.8 and 2.5 represent a slightly negative attitude; mean scores located on the scale between 3.5 and 4.1 represent a positive attitude; and a very positive attitude falls in the range of 4.2 and 5.0. All mean scores between 2.6 and 3.4 are neutral.

Table 7

One-Way ANOVA for Overall Climate and 16 Sub-Categories

Category	df	Mean Sq.	F	Sig.	Mean AYP+	Range Scale	Mean AYP-	Range Scale
Overall Climate	1,10.20	.76	.01	p>.05	3.3	N	3.3	N
Role Conflict	1,13.51	.03	.07	p>.05	3.3	N	3.3	N
Job Autonomy	1,9.94	.84	.68	p>.05	3.8	P	3.6	S.P.
Job Importance	1,11.32	2.33	3.54	p>.05	4.2	P	4.0	P
Job Pressure	1,11.57	.22	.25	p>.05	2.6	N	2.6	N
Leader Support	1,10.07	3.62	1.44	p>.05	3.7	P	3.2	N
Leader Goal Emphasis	1,9.94	.39	.21	p>.05	3.7	P	3.7	P
Leader Work Facilitation	1,9.52	1.40	.37	p>.05	3.6	S.P.	3.4	N
Leader Inter. Facilitation	1,9.77	.00	.00	p>.05	3.5	N	3.5	N
Leader Upward Interaction	1,13.28	1.20	3.21	p>.05	3.6	S.P.	3.4	N
Leader Confidence & Trust	1,10.00	2.26	.94	p>.05	3.7	P	3.4	N
Workgroup Cooperation	1,11.27	.00	.00	p>.05	3.5	S.P.	3.5	S.P.
Openness of Expression	1,10.08	.39	.20	p>.05	3.4	N	3.2	N
Esprit de Corps	1,9.73	.97	.50	p>.05	3.3	N	3.4	N
Planning Effectiveness	1,10.58	.85	.70	p>.05	2.9	N	3.1	N
Decision Making Characteristics	1,11.57	1.01	1.48	p>.05	3.0	N	2.8	N
Student Characteristics	1,9.29	.94	.23	p>.05	2.5	S.N.	2.5	S.N.



A = Very Negative Range
B = Negative Range
Neutral = Undecided Range
D = Positive Range
E = Very Positive Range

AYP- = Schools that did not achieve AYP for 4 years

AYP+ = Schools that did not achieve AYP for 3 years but did achieve AYP in year the 4th year

Figure 1. Range of climate scores for each of the 16 sub-categories.

Chi-Square Analysis on Each Climate Statement

A chi-square analysis was also completed on each of the 67 survey items and 8 of the 67 statements revealed significant differences between the AYP+ and AYP- schools. The following narrative analyzes how the schools differed.

Esprit de Corps

Table 8 presents a chi-square analysis of the statement: “Teachers in this School are ‘alive;’ They are interested in life around them; They are doing interesting things outside of school.” There was a significant difference between AYP+ and AYP- schools regarding Esprit de Corps. The data in Table 8 shows that 65% of the teachers in the AYP+ schools reported that “Teachers in their school were ‘alive;’ interested in life around them; and were doing interesting things outside of school.” Only 55% of the teachers perceived Esprit de Corps in the AYP- schools. Ten percent of the teachers in the AYP- schools disagreed with this statement while 21% disagree in the AYP+ schools. Thirty-three percent of the AYP- teachers remained neutral compared to 13% of the teachers in the AYP+ schools.

Table 8

Teachers in this School are "Alive;" They are Interested in Life Around Them; They are Doing Interesting Things Outside of School

School	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree/Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
AYP+	1.3%	20.0%	13.3%	50.7%	14.7%
AYP-	6.8%	4.1%	32.9%	47.9%	8.2%

Note. *p<.05.

Planning and Effectiveness

A chi-square analysis revealed significant differences in two statements that were included in the Planning and Effectiveness sub-category.

The first significant difference was found in the statement: "Are district personnel aware of the problems and needs at your level?" Table 9 shows that 32% of the participants in the AYP- schools reported that their district personnel were aware of the problems and needs at their level to a good or great deal compared with only 21% of the teachers who felt this way in the AYP+ schools. Forty-six percent of the AYP+ teachers' responses were neutral while only 25% were neutral in the AYP- schools. However, 44% of the teachers in the AYP- schools reported a negative attitude toward district personnel as being aware of the problems and needs at their level while only 34% of the AYP+ teachers reported a negative attitude.

The data in Table 10 reveals a significant difference between the AYP+ and AYP- school regarding: "Does your principal utilize resources persons from the district to help teachers?" Fifty-two percent of the participants in the AYP- schools reported that the principal does utilize district resource people routinely to help the staff often

Table 9

Are District Personnel Aware of the Problems and Needs at Your Level

School	Not At All	Slightly	Somewhat	A Good Deal	A Great Deal
AYP+	13.0%	20.8%	45.5%	19.5%	1.3%
AYP-	16.4%	27.4%	24.7%	19.2%	12.3%

Note. *p<.05.

Table 10

Does Your Principal Utilize Resource Persons from the District to Help Teachers

School	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
AYP+	0.0%	24.7%	42.9%	23.4%	9.1%
AYP-	2.7%	19.2%	26.0%	32.9%	19.2%

Note. *p<.05.

or almost always while only 33% of the teachers in the AYP+ schools reported that their principal does this often or almost always in their schools. Forty-three percent of the teachers in the AYP+ schools reported that the principal utilizes district resource people sometimes while only 26% reported sometimes in the AYP- schools.

Job Autonomy

Table 11 reflects a significant difference in the chi-square analysis data between AYP+ and AYP- teacher responses to: "It is up to me to decide how my job should best be done." Fifty-three percent of the participants in the AYP- schools agreed with this statement, while 75% of the AYP+ participants agreed with that statement. In addition, the data shows that 17% remained neutral in the AYP+ schools while 39% were neutral in the AYP- schools.

Table 11

It is Up to Me to Decide How My Job Should Best be Done

School	Strongly Disagree /Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree /Agree
AYP+	8.0%	17.3%	74.7%
AYP-	8.2%	39.4%	53.4%

Note. *p<.05.

Leader Goal Emphasis

Table 12 presents a Chi-square analysis of the statement: “Does your principal offer new ideas for job related problems?” A significant difference did exist between AYP+ and AYP- schools regarding this statement showing that 13% responded with rarely to never in the AYP+ schools while 35% reported rarely to never in the AYP- schools. Eighty-five percent of the respondents in the AYP+ schools reported that their principal provided new ideas for job related problems at least sometimes while only 65% reported sometimes in the AYP- schools.

Table 12

Does Your Principal Offer New Ideas for Job Related Problems

School	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
AYP+	5.2%	7.8%	53.2%	26.0%	7.8%
AYP-	6.8%	28.8%	31.5%	24.7%	8.2%

Note. *p<.05.

Leader Support

When participants were asked “Is your principal successful in obtaining recognition of the successes of the

people he/she supervises," the Chi-square analysis showed a significant difference. Table 13 shows that 34% of the participants in the AYP- schools reported that the principal does not obtain recognition for them while only 14% reported that the principal does not achieve recognition for them in the AYP+ schools. Thirty-five percent remained neutral in the AYP+ schools while 30% remained neutral for the AYP- schools. In addition, 52% of the participants' responses in the AYP+ schools reported that their principal successfully obtained recognition for them were only 35% of the participants reported that the principal did in the AYP- schools.

Table 13

Is Your Principal Successful in Obtaining Recognition of the Successes of the People He/She Supervises

School	Not At All	Slightly	Somewhat	A Good Deal	A Great Deal
AYP+	5.2%	9.1%	35.1%	41.6%	9.1%
AYP-	12.3%	21.9%	30.1%	21.9%	13.7%

Note. *p<.05.

Leader Work Facilitation

Table 14 presents a chi-square analysis of the statement: “In my school, the principal sets priorities, makes plans, and sees that they are carried out.” A significant difference was found for this statement showing that 71% of the participants in the AYP+ schools agreed or agreed strongly that the principal sets priorities, make plans, and sees that they are carried out while only 47% of the AYP- school participants agreed or agreed strongly that this occurs. In addition, only 14% of the teachers in the AYP+ schools disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement while that number increased to 33% of the teachers in the AYP- schools who disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Table 14

In My School, the Principal Sets Priorities, Makes Plans, and Sees that They are Carried Out

School	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree/Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
AYP+	5.0%	8.8%	15.0%	51.2%	20.0%
AYP-	8.2%	24.7%	20.5%	26.0%	20.5%

Note. *p<.05.

Student Characteristics

In Table 15, a chi-square analysis is presented for the statement: "Nearly all students in this school achieve at or above their grade level." Although a significant difference was not found between AYP+ and AYP- schools regarding this statement, the results were surprising to the researcher. Sixty-three percent of the teachers in the AYP+ schools and 62% of the teachers in the AYP- schools reported that students do not achieve at or above their grade level.

Table 15

Nearly all Students in this School Achieve at or Above Their Grade Level

School	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree/Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
AYP+	18.3%	43.8%	16.2%	20.0%	1.2%
AYP-	37.0%	24.7%	16.4%	21.9%	0.0%

Note. *p<.05.

Chi-Square Analysis by School and Gender

Chi-square analyses were conducted to determine whether or not significant differences existed between AYP+ and AYP- schools, gender, and the 67 survey items. It was

necessary to collapse response categories to eliminate empty cells for the statements and to prevent the chi-squares from violating the assumption.

Table 16 shows that chi-square analysis identified a significant difference between females in the AYP+ and AYP- schools in the Openness of Expression sub-category. Sixty-seven percent of the females in the AYP+ schools agreed that their school policies encourage openness in communication compared to only 35% in the AYP- schools.

Table 16

In my School, Policies Encourage Openness in Communication

School	Gender	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Neutral	Agree/Strongly Agree
AYP+	Males	32%	20%	48%
	Females	16.4%	16.4%	67.3%
AYP-	Males	12%	28%	60%
	Females	33.3%	31.2%	35.4%

Note. *p<.05.

The results of the chi-square analysis shown in Table 17 indicate that 58% of the females in the AYP+ schools report a good or great deal of job pressure from the principal where only 42% of the females report Job Pressure to a good or great deal in the AYP- schools. In addition, 42% of the females in the AYP- schools report Job Pressure a good or great deal compared to 60% of the males who report that they experience it a good or great deal in the AYP- schools.

Table 17

Does Your Principal Put a lot of Pressure on You about Your Job

School	Gender	Not at All	Somewhat	Good/Great Deal
AYP+	Males	12.5%	29.2%	58.3%
	Females	24.5%	11.3%	64.2%
AYP-	Males	20%	20%	60%
	Females	22.9%	35.4%	41.7%

Note. *p<.05.

Almost 65% percent of the females in the AYP+ and AYP- schools and 67% of the males in the AYP+ schools report that teachers in their school are “alive,” and doing interesting things outside of school. However, the chi

square analysis in Table 18 reveals that only 40% of the males report this about the Esprit de Corps in the AYP- schools.

Table 18

Teachers in this School are "Alive;" They are Interested in Life Around Them; They are Doing Interesting Things Outside of School

School	Gender	Strongly Dis-agree/Disagree	Neutral	Agree/Strongly Agree
AYP+	Males	29.2%	4.2%	66.7%
	Females	17.6%	17.6%	64.7%
AYP-	Males	16%	44%	40%
	Females	8.3%	27.1%	64.6%

Note. *p<.05.

A chi-square revealed that 25% of the females in the AYP- schools felt their principal offered new ideas for job related problems, whereas 34% of the females and 33% of the males reported this in the AYP+ schools. Surprisingly, 48% of the males in the AYP- schools reported the principal offered new ideas often. Table 19 shows that only 7.5% of the females and 25% of the males in the AYP+ schools felt

Table 19

Does Your Principal Offer New Ideas for Job Related Problems

School	Gender	Never/ Rarely	Sometimes	Always /Often
AYP+	Males	25%	41.7%	33.3%
	Females	7.5%	58.5	34%
AYP-	Males	40%	12%	48%
	Females	33.3%	41.7%	25%

Note. *p<.05.

the principal rarely offered new ideas compared to 40% of the males and 33.3% of the females in the AYP- schools.

The chi-square revealed that 84.3% of the females in the AYP+ schools report they get to determine how their jobs should best be done where only 45.8% of the females in the AYP- schools report they get to decide how to do their work. Table 20 also shows that 68% of the males in the AYP- schools get to determine how best to do their jobs compared to 54.2% of the males in the AYP+ schools. Only 8% of the males and females in both AYP+ and AYP- schools reported that is was not up to them to decide how best to do their jobs.

Table 20

It is Up to Me to Decide How My Job Should Best be Done

School	Gender	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Neutral	Agree/Strongly Agree
AYP+	Males	8.3%	37.5%	54.2%
	Females	7.8%	7.8%	84.3%
AYP-	Males	8%	24%	68%
	Females	8.3%	45.8%	45.8%

Note. *p<.05.

The chi-square revealed that 47.9% of the AYP- females disagreed with the statement that it is usually clear about what needs to be done in their school after decisions are made compared to only 23.6% of the AYP+ females who disagreed with the statement. Table 21 also shows that 65.5% of the AYP+ females agreed that it is usually clear what needs to be done after decisions are made whereas only 39.6% of the AYP- females agreed.

Table 21

In My School, When Decisions are Made, it is Usually Clear What Needs to be Done to Carry Them Out

School	Gender	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Neutral	Agree/Strongly Agree
AYP+	Males	36%	24%	40%
	Females	23.6%	10.9%	65.5%
AYP-	Males	24%	16%	60%
	Females	47.9%	12.5%	39.6%

Note. *p<.05.

The data from the chi-square analysis in Table 22 shows that 62.5% of the males and 52.8% of the females in the AYP+ schools report the principals recognize and reward good performance compared with only 40% of the males and

43.8% of the females in the AYP- schools who agreed that this occurs. In fact, Table 22 shows that 33% of the females in the AYP- schools report the principal rarely recognizes or rewards good performance compared with only 11.3% of the females who reported the principal does not recognize and reward performance at all in the AYP+ schools.

Significant differences were found through chi-square analysis in the Leader Support sub-category. Fifty-one percent of the females and 50% of the males in the AYP+ schools reported the principal successfully obtained recognition for them where only 36% of the males and 35% of the females reported this happens to a good or great deal in the AYP- schools. In addition, Table 23 reveals that 40% of the AYP- females reported that the principal rarely obtains recognition for them whereas only 14% of the AYP+ females report this occurs.

Table 22

Does Your Principal Recognize and Reward Good Performance

School	Gender	Not at All	Somewhat	Good/Great Deal
AYP+	Males	25%	12.5%	62.5%
	Females	11.3%	35.8%	52.8%
AYP-	Males	24%	36%	40%
	Females	33.3%	22.9%	43.8%

Note. *p<.05.

Table 23

Is Your Principal Successful in Obtaining Recognition of the Successes of the People He/She Supervises

School	Gender	Not at All	Somewhat	Good/Great Deal
AYP+	Males	16.7%	33.3%	50%
	Females	13.2%	35.8%	50.9%
AYP-	Males	24%	40%	36%
	Females	39.6%	25%	35.4%

Note. *p<.05.

Chi-Square Analysis by School and Years of Teaching in the School

Chi-square analyses were conducted to determine whether significant differences existed between AYP+ and AYP- schools, years of teaching in the school, and the 67 survey items. It was necessary to collapse response categories to eliminate empty cells for the questions and to prevent the chi-squares from violating the assumption. The response options for number of years teaching were collapsed from 4 options to 2 options which included two categories: 10 years or less of teaching in the school and more than 10 years of teaching in the school.

A significant difference was identified in the Planning and Effectiveness sub-category on Table 24. Seven percent of the teachers with 10 or less years of teaching experience in the AYP+ schools reported that district personnel respond to ideas and suggestions from people at their level often or always while that number increased to 41% for teachers with 10 or less years of experience in the AYP- schools. However, 29% of AYP+ teachers with more than 10 years experience reported that district personnel respond to their ideas and suggestions often or always compared with 13% of the AYP- teachers with more than 10 years experience.

Table 24

Do District Personnel Respond to Ideas and Suggestions from People at Your Level

School	Years in School	Never/ Rarely	Sometimes	Always /Often
AYP+	10 or Less	35.1%	57.9%	7%
	More Than 10	30%	45%	28.6%
AYP-	10 or Less	38.3%	32.7%	40.8%
	More Than 10	29.2%	58.3%	12.5%

Note. *p<.05.

The chi-square analysis revealed that 70% of the teachers with 10 or less years experience in the AYP+ schools and 75% of the teachers with more than 10 years teaching experience in the AYP+ schools agreed that the principal sets priorities, makes plans, and sees that they are carried out; compared with only 47% of the teachers with 10 or less years experience and 46% of the teachers with more than 10 years experience who were teaching in the AYP- schools agreed that the principal sets priorities, makes plans and see that they are carried out (Table 25).

Table 25

In My School, the Principal Sets Priorities, Makes Plans, and Sees that They are Carried Out

School	Years at School	Strongly Dis-agree/Disagree	Neutral	Agree/Strongly Agree
AYP+	10 or Less	15%	15%	70%
	More Than 10	10%	15%	75%
AYP-	10 or Less	34.7%	18.4%	46.9%
	More Than 10	29.2%	25%	45.8%

Note. *p<.05.

The chi-square revealed that 70% of the teachers with more than 10 years of experience working in the AYP+ schools reported their principal was successful to a good or great deal in obtaining recognition of their successes compared to only 25% of the teachers with more than 10 years of experience who have been working in the AYP- schools and reported that the principal gains recognition for their successes. Only 5% of the AYP+ teachers with more than 10 years experience reported that the principal is not successful in obtaining recognition at all compared to 46% of the AYP- teachers who reported that the principal does not obtain recognition for them.

A Look at the Impact of Gender and Years of Experience

A two-way ANOVA was conducted by the researcher to analyze overall and sub-category scores by type of school and gender. No interactions or main effects were found between these variables for the overall climate scores, but there were significant differences found among years of teaching and type of school. Although there were no significant differences between males and females, female scores in the AYP+ and AYP- schools were reported in the slightly negative range for Job Pressure and Student

Table 26

Is Your Principal Successful in Obtaining Recognition of the Successes of the People He/She Supervises

School	Years at School	Not at All	Somewhat	Good/Great Deal
AYP+	10 or Less	17.5%	38.6%	43.9%
	More Than 10	5%	25%	70%
AYP-	10 or Less	28.6%	30.6%	40.8%
	More Than 10	45.8%	29.2%	25%

Note. *p<.05.

Characteristics. AYP- males reported slightly negative scores regarding Student Characteristics compared to the AYP+ males' climate scores were neutral. The climate scores reported by all AYP + and - males and females were neutral for Role Conflict, Planning Effectiveness, Decision Making, and for the Overall Climate. All males and females in the AYP + and - schools reported slightly positive responses for Job Autonomy, Leader Goal Emphasis, Upward Interaction, Job Importance, and Confidence and Trust. In general, all additional scores were either neutral or positive for the males and females for Leader Work Facilitation, Leader Support, Openness of Expression, and Esprit de Corps sub-categories.

A two-way ANOVA was conducted by the researcher to determine if a significant difference existed between AYP+ schools, AYP- schools, and years of teaching at the school. No significant differences were found between these variables for the overall climate score and most of the sub-categories. In general, teachers scored in the neutral range in the Openness of Expression and Esprit de Corps sub-categories. The following sub-categories had neutral and slightly positive mean climate scores: Leader Support, Leader Work Facilitation, Leader Interaction Facilitation, and Workgroup Cooperation. The Job Importance sub-category

had both slightly positive and positive mean climate scores.

A significant interaction was found between mean scores in the Leader Support sub-category. New teachers in the AYP+ schools (Mean = 4.4) and the AYP- schools (Mean = 4.3) had more positive climate scores than teachers with 21+ years experience in the AYP- schools (Mean = 2.2).

The Tukey-Wallace HSD revealed that teachers with 21+ years of experience in the AYP- schools had slightly more negative perceptions about the Leader Support they receive than all other teachers regarding years of teaching in the AYP+ and AYP- schools. In addition, first year teachers in the AYP+ schools (Mean = 4.4) were more positive about their Leader Support than teachers with 2-10 years experience in both the AYP+ (Mean = 3.4) and AYP- schools (Mean = 3.3). In addition, no significant difference was found between the 2-10 year AYP- group of teachers (Mean = 3.3) and the AYP+ group of teachers with 11-20 years of experience (Mean = 4.0) (Table 27).

Table 27

Two-Way AOV Leader Support Sub-Category

A School	B Years Teaching at School	Leader Support Mean
AYP+	First Year	4.4
	2-10 Years	3.4
	11-20 Years	4.0
	21+ Years	3.7
AYP-	First Year	4.3
	2-10 Years	3.3
	11-20 Years	3.5
	21+ Years	2.2
(A) School		*
(B) Years of Teaching at the school		*
(A x B) Interaction Effect		*

Follow-up Analysis for Two-Way AOV Leader Support Sub-Category

	2.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.7	4.0	4.3	4.4
2.2	-	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
3.3		-	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	*
3.4		NS	-	NS	NS	NS	NS	*
3.5		NS	NS	-	NS	NS	NS	NS
3.7		NS	NS	NS	-	NS	NS	NS
4.0		NS	NS	NS	NS	-	NS	NS
4.3		NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	-	NS
4.4				NS	NS	NS	NS	-

Note. *Significant difference at a p <.05 level.

A significant interaction was found between mean scores in the Decision Making sub-category. Table 28 shows first year teachers in both AYP+ (Mean = 3.4) and AYP- schools (Mean = 3.6) reported slightly more positive sub-category climate scores toward sharing in the decision making than the teachers in the + and – schools with 2-10 years of experience. New teachers in the AYP+ schools (Mean = 3.4) however, were much more positive about decision making in their schools than teachers with 21+ years in the AYP- schools (Mean = 2.7).

The Tukey HSD revealed teachers with 21+ years of experience in the AYP+ schools (Mean = 3.4) had more positive perceptions about sharing in the decision making in their schools than teachers did in the AYP- schools (Mean = 2.3). It also appears first year teachers in both the AYP+ (Mean = 3.4) and AYP- (Mean = 3.7) schools are more positive about sharing in the decision making process than AYP- teachers (Mean = 2.3) with 21 or more years of experience. No significant difference was found between AYP- teachers with 2-10 years of experience (Mean = 2.7) and the first year AYP+ teachers (Mean = 3.4), first year AYP- teachers (Mean = 3.6), or AYP+ teachers with 21+ years of experience (Mean = 3.4).

Table 28

Two-Way AOV Decision Making Sub-Category

A School	B Years Teaching at School	Decision Making Mean
AYP+	First Year	3.4
	2-10 Years	2.8
	11-20 Years	2.9
	21+ Years	3.4
AYP-	First Year	3.6
	2-10 Years	2.7
	11-20 Years	3.0
	21+ Years	2.3
(A) School		*
(B) Years of Teaching at the school		*
(A x B) Interaction Effect		*

Follow-up Analysis for Two-Way AOV Decision Making Sub-Category

	2.3	2.7	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.4	3.4	3.6
2.3	-	NS	NS	NS	NS	*	*	*
2.7	NS	-	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
2.8	NS	NS	-	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
2.9	NS	NS	NS	-	NS	NS	NS	NS
3.0		NS	NS	NS	-	NS	NS	NS
3.4		NS	NS	NS	NS	-	NS	NS
3.4		NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	-	NS
3.6		NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	-

Note. *Significant difference at a p <.05 level.

AYP Climate Among Rural, Urban, and Suburban Schools

Two-way ANOVAs were conducted by the researcher to analyze if a significant difference existed between AYP+ schools, AYP- schools, among rural, urban and suburban schools. No significant differences were found by the researcher between AYP+ and AYP- urban, rural and suburban schools for the overall climate since most of the scores were in the neutral range. However, significant differences were found between AYP+ and AYP- schools in 4 of the 16 sub-categories: Leader Work Facilitation, Leader Facilitation Interaction, Leader Confidence and Trust, and Openness of Expression.

A significant interaction was found between suburban AYP+ teachers who appear to feel more positive about the work facilitation from their principals than teachers do in the AYP- suburban schools. The mean scores in Table 29 show that teachers in the AYP+ suburban schools have positive attitudes (mean = 4.0) toward how well their leader facilitates work within their schools whereas teachers in the AYP- suburban schools report neutral responses (mean = 2.9).

A follow-up Tukey HSD revealed that AYP+ rural teachers (Mean = 3.8) and the AYP- urban teachers (Mean = 3.6) had more positive perceptions about how well their

Table 29

Two-Way AOV Leader Work Facilitation Sub-Category

School	Location	Leader Work Facilitation
AYP+	Rural	3.8
	Suburban	4.0
	Urban	3.4
AYP-	Rural	3.8
	Suburban	2.9
	Urban	3.6
(A) School		*
(B) School Location		*
(A x B) Interaction Effect		*

Follow-up Analysis for Two-Way AOV Leader Work Facilitation Sub-Category

	2.9	3.4	3.6	3.8	3.8	4.0
2.9	-	NS	*	*	*	*
3.4		-	NS	NS	NS	NS
3.6		NS	-	NS	NS	NS
3.8		NS	NS	-	NS	NS
3.8		NS	NS	NS	-	NS
4.0		NS	NS	NS	NS	-

Note. *Significant difference at a p <.05 level.

school leader facilitates work than the AYP- suburban teachers (Mean = 2.9). In addition, the AYP+ suburban teachers (Mean = 4.0) and the AYP+ rural teachers (Mean = 3.8) viewed work facilitation as more positive than the AYP- suburban teachers (Mean = 2.9).

A significant interaction was also found between suburban AYP+ and AYP- schools for the Leader Interaction Facilitation sub-category. The mean scores in Table 30 show that teachers in the AYP+ suburban schools appear to have more positive attitudes (mean = 4.0) toward how well their leader facilitates interaction between them than teachers do in the AYP- suburban schools (mean = 3.2).

No significant differences were found by the researcher utilizing the Tukey-Wallace HSD. Therefore, an LSD was used for the follow-up analysis. The results of the LSD revealed that teachers in the AYP+ Suburban (Mean = 4.0) and AYP- urban (Mean = 3.8) schools have more positive perceptions about how their leader facilitates interaction between them than the rural and suburban AYP- teachers and the AYP+ Urban teachers. However, AYP- urban teachers had a slightly more positive perception than the AYP+ urban teachers did in this sub-category. AYP+ suburban teachers (Mean = 4.0) had more positive perceptions about Leader

Table 30

Two-Way AOV Leader Interaction Facilitation Sub-Category

School	Location	Leader Interaction Facilitation
AYP+	Rural	3.6
	Suburban	4.0
	Urban	3.3
AYP-	Rural	3.3
	Suburban	3.2
	Urban	3.7
(A) School		*
(B) School Location		*
(A x B) Interaction Effect		*

Follow-up Analysis for Two-Way AOV Leader Interaction Facilitation Sub-Category

	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.6	3.7	4.0
3.2	-	NS	NS	*	*	*
3.3	NS	-	NS	NS	*	*
3.3	NS	NS	-	NS	NS	NS
3.6		NS	NS	-	NS	NS
3.7			NS	NS	-	NS
4.0			NS	NS	NS	-

Note. *Significant difference at a p <.05 level.

Interaction within their schools than AYP- rural teachers (Mean = 3.3).

An additional significant interaction was identified in the Leader Confidence and Trust sub-category. The mean scores in Table 31 show that teachers in the AYP+ suburban schools appear to have positive attitudes (mean = 4.2) toward how much confidence and trust they have in their leader within their school whereas teachers in the AYP- suburban schools report neutral responses (mean = 3.0).

The Tukey-Wallace HSD follow-up analysis also revealed the AYP+ suburban school teachers (Mean = 4.2) had more positive perceptions than the teachers did in the AYP- suburban schools (Mean = 3.0) about the confidence and trust that teachers have in their leader. In addition, the AYP+ rural (Mean = 3.7) and AYP- urban (Mean = 3.7) teachers had more positive perceptions about the confidence and trust in their leader than the AYP- suburban teachers did (Mean = 3.0).

The Openness of Expression sub-category in the suburban schools revealed a significant interaction. The mean scores in Table 32 show that teachers in the AYP+ suburban schools (mean = 3.8) appear to have more positive perceptions toward openly expressing themselves in their

Table 31

Two-Way AOV Leader Confidence and Trust Sub-Category

School	Location	Leader Confidence and Trust
AYP+	Rural	3.7
	Suburban	4.2
	Urban	3.7
AYP-	Rural	3.6
	Suburban	3.0
	Urban	3.7
(A) School		*
(B) School Location		*
(A x B) Interaction Effect		*

Follow-up Analysis for Two-Way AOV Leader Confidence and Trust Sub-Category

	3.0	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.7	4.2
3.0	-	NS	*	*	*	*
3.6	NS	-	NS	NS	NS	NS
3.7	NS	NS	-	NS	NS	NS
3.7	NS	NS	NS	-	NS	NS
3.7	NS	NS	NS	NS	-	NS
4.2		NS	NS	NS	NS	-

Note. *Significant difference at a p <.05 level.

Table 32

Two-Way AOV Openness of Expression Sub-Category

School	Location	Openness of Expression
AYP+	Rural	3.6
	Suburban	3.8
	Urban	3.2
AYP-	Rural	3.5
	Suburban	2.9
	Urban	3.4
(A) School		*
(B) School Location		*
(A x B) Interaction Effect		*

Follow-up Analysis for Two-Way AOV Leader Openness of Expression Sub-Category

	2.9	3.2	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.8
2.9	-	NS	NS	NS	*	NS
3.2	NS	-	NS	NS	NS	NS
3.4	NS	NS	-	NS	NS	NS
3.5	NS	NS	NS	-	NS	NS
3.6		NS	NS	NS	-	NS
3.8	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	-

Note. *Significant difference at a p <.05 level.

schools than teachers do in the AYP- suburban schools (mean = 2.9).

The results of a follow-up analysis completed using the Tukey-Wallace HSD revealed teachers in the AYP+ rural schools (Mean = 3.6) have a more positive perception about openly expressing themselves than teachers do in the AYP- suburban schools (Mean = 2.9). Although there was a difference of .8 between AYP+ suburban and AYP- suburban schools, the sample size was not large enough for the AYP+ suburban group of teachers to make this difference significant. If there were more people in the AYP+ suburban group, this difference may have been significant.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

Educators and researchers alike are beginning to recognize the substantial influence school climate has on student achievement and the school's ability to achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Research has also shown that the assumptions, values, and beliefs that are commonly shared in an organization relate strongly to faculty perceptions, feelings, and behavior (Mitchell & Willover, 1992). Perceptions evolve into the more focused belief and value systems that influence decision-making and actions (Schein, 1985). Collectively within a school, these individual teacher perceptions form the norms that influence the larger school climate (Malak, 2002).

Positive school climate may have an impact on enhanced academic achievement. Although school climate is a broad term, most research studies agree that school climate is measurable and has multi-dimensional characteristics (Xie, 2008). A positive school climate can be characterized by staff and student cohesiveness, high morale, a caring environment, mutual respect, and trust.

The Effective Schools Movement has clarified and specified the ingredients necessary for developing effective schools and positive learning climates (Cotton, 1995). Knowing what works should insure that schools who put these climate impacting ingredients in place will become an effective school. Yet this is simply not the case. Effectiveness indicators must be evaluated within the context of organizational climate (Wright, 2007). Effective schools develop systems that contribute to higher student achievement for all students and they include leadership, and a school climate of high expectations that embraces the diversity that students bring to the school (Croatt, 2008).

Effectiveness indicators are supported by the perceptions people have from their prior experiences and from what they believe works and does not work (Bodnar, 1997). In addition, systems that augment structures already in place, may produce higher achieving students in areas where poverty has a huge impact on student achievement (Croatt, 2008). Elementary schools traditionally have a more positive, collaborative climate than secondary schools (Xie, 2008). Middle schools however, often have an educational climate that falls somewhere in between. The failure of previous school

improvement efforts may be the result of ignoring the impact that school climate has on student achievement and whether a school can achieve AYP required by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) federal legislation.

The purpose of this study was to explore and compare the climate within five middle schools in Pennsylvania that failed to achieve AYP for four consecutive years (AYP- schools) with six middle schools in Pennsylvania that finally did achieve AYP in their fourth year (AYP+ schools). The study surveyed school climate perceptions of middle school teachers in each of the 11 middle schools.

The study analyzed responses to a 67 item climate survey that was composed of 16 different sub-categories. The School Ecology Survey (SES)responses were examined to determine whether perceptions differed between AYP+ and AYP- schools. Hall and Hord's (2004) research on school climate and change found that the individual facilitating change must understand that change requires a team effort in order to succeed. They concluded that organizational climate is generally positive when teachers, administrators, and students work as a team. In addition, research has found that administrators do make a difference during the change process and that their actions directly affect organizational climate. School climate is affected

by the principal's administrative style and can positively or negatively affect the learning climate of the building. Hall and Hord believe that organizational climate is more positive in schools having "Initiator Principals" (Hall & Hord, 2004).

Summary of Findings

Over the years, researchers have repeatedly found that school climate influences student achievement (Giani, 2008). Most important in the research finding is the understanding that climate is created and therefore can be changed. This finding offers a sense of hope to districts with negative climates indicating that just as a negative climate is created it can also be reversed.

This research focused on the perceptions between teachers from AYP+ and AYP- schools. Overall, perceptions of school climate between the two groups did not differ. Why? Perhaps the impact of a one-year change in test scores may not have had an immediate impact on teacher perceptions of the overall school climate within their building simply because the preceding three years was met with poor achievement results.

Although AYP+ schools experienced a positive increase in Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) score in

year four, the increase may not have been enough to produce a positive change in climate scores. However, when each individual survey statement was analyzed using chi-square some significant differences were revealed between the AYP+ and AYP- schools. In addition, a two-way ANOVA revealed some significant differences between the AYP + and - schools when comparing years of teaching and urban, suburban, and rural schools. Finally, two factor Chi-Square Analysis was conducted to determine whether significant differences existed between gender, AYP + and – schools, and years of teaching.

Although minor, the return rate from the AYP+ schools was greater than the AYP- schools. This small piece of evidence regarding participation rates may represent a developing sense of pride among the teachers from the AYP+ schools and perhaps celebrates pride in their recent accomplishment (Malak, 2002).

The initial analysis of survey data began with an examination of the overall climate in AYP+ and AYP- schools. A one-way ANOVA was used to compare the mean scores for the overall climate. The overall findings indicated no significant differences between the mean scores for the Overall Climate and each of the 16 sub-

categories in the AYP+ and AYP- schools. Most scores fell within the neutral range.

A chi-square analysis was completed on each of the 67 survey statements for the AYP+ and AYP- schools. Eight of the 67 statements revealed significant differences. The chi-square analysis showed that more teachers in the AYP+ schools than the AYP- schools agreed that their colleagues were “alive,” interested in life around them and doing interesting things outside of school. More of the AYP+ teachers than AYP- teachers felt that it was up to them to decide how their jobs should best be done. In addition, a larger percentage of the AYP+ teachers agreed that their principal set priorities made plans and saw that they are carried out. Furthermore, there were more teachers in the AYP- schools than AYP+ schools who reported that the district personnel were aware slightly or perhaps not at all about their problems and needs. There were also more AYP- teachers than the AYP+ teachers who reported that their principal was not successful in obtaining recognition of their successes. Additionally, a greater percentage of AYP- teachers than AYP+ teachers reported that the principal utilizes district resource people routinely to help the staff. One could speculate that perhaps the principals in the AYP+ schools utilize outside of district

resources people to help their staff. There were also a greater percentage of AYP- teachers than AYP+ teachers who reported that their principals rarely or never offered new ideas for job related problems.

Chi-square analysis by school and gender revealed that more females in the AYP+ schools than in the AYP- schools reported that school policies encourage openness of communication and that there was more job pressure from the principal. In addition, more AYP+ females than AYP- females reported that their principal offered new ideas for job related problems, and that they get to determine how their jobs should best be done, and that it is usually clear what needs to be done after decisions are made in their schools. However, more males in the AYP+ schools than AYP- schools reported that teachers in their schools are "alive," and doing exciting things outside of school. The principals recognize and reward good performance and successfully obtained recognition for males and females more often in the AYP+ schools than in the AYP- schools. Furthermore, fewer of the teachers with 10 or less years of teaching experience in the AYP+ schools than in the AYP- schools reported that district personnel respond to ideas and suggestions from people at their level. However, a larger percentage of AYP+ teachers than AYP- teachers with

more than 10 years experience reported that district personnel often respond to their ideas and suggestions.

The two-factor chi-square analysis also revealed that more of the AYP+ teachers than AYP- teachers with 10 or less years experience agreed that the principal sets priorities, makes plans, and sees that they are carried out. Additionally, a greater number of AYP+ teachers than AYP- teachers with more than 10 years of experience reported that their principal was successful in obtaining recognition of their successes and more of the AYP- teachers than AYP+ teachers who had 11+ years experience reported that the principal is not successful in obtaining recognition for them.

Chi-square revealed that significant differences also existed between males and females in the AYP+ and AYP- schools. More males than females in the AYP+ schools disagreed that policies encouraged openness of communication in their school. On the contrary, more females than males disagreed with this statement in the AYP- schools. In addition, more males than females in the AYP- schools felt a great deal of pressure from their principal. The data reveals the opposite however in the AYP+ schools where more females than males felt pressure from the principal. Twice as many AYP- males than females

reported their principal offered new ideas often for job related problems. In the AYP+ schools however, there were several more males than females who reported the principal rarely offered ideas. Furthermore, a greater number of males than females in the AYP- schools agreed that it was up to them to decide how their job should best be done and that when decisions were made, it was usually clear what needed to be done to carry them out. In the AYP+ schools however, more females than males agreed that this occurs.

Overall Analysis

Overall there were no differences in perception of climate between the schools. This study did not identify a main difference between the climate in the AYP+ and AYP- schools. One factor might be the School Ecology Survey (SES) instrument itself. The SES may not have provided significant data pertaining to each school simply because the variables affecting the climate may not have been included as part of the survey instrument design. Perhaps an alternative and more sensitive climate survey instrument could be utilized that would provide more information about the climate within each school. A second factor pertaining to why no differences were found between schools could perhaps be that the schools had been under a cloud for the

past five years and it could take several additional years of progress to really impact the climate. In fact, climate scores were lower among teachers who have 6 years or more of teaching experience. Teachers in both the AYP+ and AYP- schools begin their teaching careers feeling extremely positive about the role they play in the decision making process and their ability to openly express how they feel with the principal. In addition, they have more positive perceptions of how the principal supports them, facilitates work, and interaction between them, and how well the staff works together. All of these perceptions appear positive for all eight sub-categories compared with more negative perceptions of teachers that have more than two years of experience in the schools. The positive perceptions that new teachers begin their careers with could be the result of years of training in a positive university environment that leads them to believe that they can accomplish any goal which they may face in the public schools if they try hard enough. This positive outlook for many new teachers however, sadly begins to fade as they discover that many of the influences outside of school that students face can often times be counterproductive to the goals and objectives that they themselves have set for the learners entrusted in their care. Unfortunately, many students

experience situations such as drug abuse, divorce, molestation, neglect, nutrition, improper care, etc., and teachers struggle to find ways to help them cope with these issue while at the same time, must ensure that none of them are left behind.

There were a greater number of teachers in the AYP+ schools who reported that the principal set priorities, made plans, and saw that they are carried out while fewer teachers in the AYP- schools reported that the principal did this. Perhaps AYP was more successfully achieved by the AYP+ schools because the principals were knowledgeable about data analysis, data driven decision making, and root cause analysis. This would have allowed them to set priorities and make plans with teachers based on academic performance data that may have helped them to improve student learning. Follow-up analysis of the data may have helped both the teachers and the principals see that the plans were carried out in the AYP+ schools.

This study also found that teachers with more than 10 years experience working in the AYP+ schools reported more Leader Support than the teachers with 10 or more years of experience in the AYP- schools. Perhaps the school climate was slightly more positive in the AYP+ schools because their principals focused attention on working closely with

the teachers who had 11-21+ years of experience. The collaboration between them may have fostered feelings among the teachers of self-worth. Leader support may have been provided to the veteran staff members before efforts toward achieving AYP began to diminish. Perhaps the principals in the AYP+ schools provided for the needs of the teachers in each experience group more adequately by paying attention to their feelings and concerns.

Conclusions

A one year positive change in PSSA scores may not have a dramatic effect on school climate. No significant difference was found for the Overall Climate and each of the 16 sub-categories in the AYP+ and AYP- schools. Although no statistical significant difference was found between the means in each sub-category, slightly more positive means were seen in 6 of the 16 sub-categories in the AYP+ schools. The researcher was able to draw few conclusions based on this data. However, as a reflective practitioner in the field of education, there were several conclusions drawn as a result of a close analysis of the differences between sub-categories and survey items for the AYP+ and AYP- schools. The researcher combined the knowledge gained from critically analyzing the SES results

with his experience as a principal and the review of literature for this study. He was able to draw several interesting conclusions pertaining to the role of the principal, the teacher's perceptions regarding school climate, the impact of testing on student achievement, the need for close monitoring of school climate, and the importance of ensuring that teachers have autonomy within the school.

The Principal

The principal may have more impact on school climate than previously thought. Research has shown that highly effective schools have elevated expectations and a strong instructional focus spear headed by the principal (Hart, 2006). These schools gain in their ability to achieve AYP when their principals offer new ideas for job related problems. The principal is the key agent in mobilizing support for change while ensuring that the focus is on improved student learning (White, 2008). A principal initiates new ideas by becoming more knowledgeable about the resources that are available to help teachers when problems arise. These principals usually seek professional development opportunities to keep them current regarding effective instructional strategies that will help teachers

enhance student learning (Roderiguez, 2007). In addition, effective principals must implement and uphold an organized culture that is aimed at reaching defined goals (White, 2008). School principals are accomplished individuals with diverse needs that are often expert in the science of teaching and learning but need support with managing the complexities of the organization called “school.” They need professional development that addresses the diversity of their skill levels (Contreras, 2008). A principal’s knowledge of what happens in each classroom, the resources that may be available, and their influence to improve instruction are the keys to improved instruction in each school (McWilliams, 2007).

Student achievement increases and schools have an improved opportunity of achieving AYP when the principal is successful in obtaining recognition of the successes for the people he/she supervises. Positive relationships can be developed and nurtured through encouragement and recognition of individual contributions to the organization (Edlow, 2008). Effective leaders realize that people do not care how much you know until they know how much you care. Thus motivational tactics can only be accomplished when people know how much the leader cares. Most people want to join in a group or pursue a goal or cause that will

have a lasting effect. They want to see the value in what they are doing. Motivation comes not just by doing the job but by being able to see and understand the end result (Lanier, 2007). Achievement also increases when the principal sets priorities, makes plans, and sees that they are carried out within the school. Principals, who are considered effective, ensure that teachers work cooperatively. Effective principals set goals and make choices about who will participate in new projects designed to meet the goals. They monitor the initial work of committees and then turn the work over to teachers once it is well on its way to successful completion (Sciarappa, 2007).

The principal should be continually informed about and involved in the work that teaching teams are engaged in (White, 2008). Administrators should provide opportunities for teachers to express their ideas as they relate to on-site decisions. As the leader of the school, the principal is the architect that designs the improvements for the school. They implement structural changes to personalize the school to provide a school climate that is positive and caring (White, 2008). The organizational vision for that school stems initially from the ideals and beliefs of the principal and then from the staff and community. Whether

the school moves forward with the vision depends on how well the principal communicates and involves others in supporting these ideals and beliefs (McWilliams, 2007).

Teachers

Teachers' perceptions toward school climate seem to become more positive as PSSA scores rise. The general fact that teachers in the AYP+ schools are more "alive" would perhaps indicate a greater willingness to embrace professional development opportunities that would help strengthen their skills as teachers. Black, (2007) found that teachers in healthy schools are committed to the students and the process of learning. In addition, they work well together, trust each other, are enthusiastic about teaching, and excited about their school (Black, 2007). When teachers increase their abilities to teach, student achievement also increases and ultimately, adequate yearly progress is improved as well. In a sense, success truly does breed success.

Years of testing that result in low achievement scores may promote negative attitudes and perceptions toward student expectations. Schools that may or may not be successfully achieving AYP may have teachers that have negative attitudes regarding student performance.

Additional gains would be made with regard to student achievement if teachers develop positive attitudes toward students and learning. One of the greatest challenges for teachers is to provide an environment that can stimulate a student's desire to learn (Virnoche, 2008). Attitudes are powerful. They have pushbutton efficiency with long-term effects on human behavior. Technically, they are the combination of perception with a judgment that often results in an emotion that influences behavior (Wlodkowski, 1978). In a healthy school environment, administration, teachers, and students have a positive relationship with each other (Hoy, 2002). The teachers push students to academic excellence and believe that students can be successful (Black, 2007).

Teacher autonomy may be a key variable in promoting a positive school climate and also promoting enhanced test scores. Distributing leadership, empowering teachers, and creating optimal conditions, including a positive climate, position a learning community to evolve (Roderiguez, 2007). Teachers that receive more autonomy over how they do their jobs produce greater achievement results with students and should therefore be given opportunities to share in the decision making that directly affects their job performance. Principals should enable teachers to explore

and experience new instructional practices and programs (Edlow, 2008). Teachers in the school need to believe that their job is very important. Researchers have determined that teacher autonomy can have positive effects on commitment, motivation, job satisfaction, stress, professionalism, and empowerment (Skinner, 2008). This study revealed that teachers in the AYP+ schools had more autonomy over their decisions about how they should do their work than did the staff working in the AYP- schools. This would perhaps be a clear indicator of improved student achievement with regard to AYP. Much like students, teachers would be much more willing to work harder if they have ownership in the decision making process as it pertains to their work. White (2008) found that teacher empowerment and participatory management build organizational learning capacity. In addition, principals must ensure that teacher-leaders operate in a truly democratic fashion and are granted sufficient authority to make decisions (White, 2008).

Monitor the Climate

School administrators need to monitor their school's climate on a regular basis. Roderiguez (2007), reports that school climate is paramount and promoting positive

school climate is often the responsibility of the building principal. This study revealed that many teachers in both the AYP+ and AYP- schools feel that district personnel were not aware of their problems. However, the principals were perceived as more involved in the teaching and learning process at the AYP+ schools than they were in the AYP- schools. The principals in the AYP+ schools did a better job of setting priorities, making plans, and seeing that they are carried out. Giani (2008), found that schools with high expectations that are clearly communicated, experience fewer incidents of disruptive behavior that could potentially cultivate a negative climate for learning within the school.

Suggestions for Further Study

Suggestions for further research include an analysis of schools with high test scores over a 10 year period. Do schools in Pennsylvania that have high PSSA scores over a ten year period also have positive learning climates? On the contrary, do schools that have not made Adequate Yearly Progress have negative climates? What is the impact of an infusion of new teachers on a school? Do new teachers enhance student achievement on the PSSA and promote positive school climate?

An additional recommendation for further research would include the opportunity for open ended responses with the School Ecology Survey that was adapted for use in this study so that it would allow for the expanded clarity of the responses. Additional space for writing could be provided on the survey design following specific statements so that teachers could elaborate and share additional thoughts. For example, they could describe how their principal sets priorities, makes plans, and sees that they are carried out rather than just responding with whether or not they agree or disagree etc.

The data indicates that some differences do exist between middle schools that have achieved Adequate Yearly Progress and those that have not. Throughout history, researchers have continually found that school climate influences student achievement in some way or another. A review of the literature suggests that no one factor can be the determinant of a school climate. However, school climate can have significant impact on individual experience and defines the quality of a school (Giani, 2008). Efforts to assist schools as they seek to discover strategies that can help them achieve Adequate Yearly Progress can only be enhanced through examination of the

attitudes and perceptions of teachers and students who are expected to learn in them.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Superintendent's Letter of Request for School Participation

(IUP Letter Head)

-------- --, 2008

Dear (name of superintendent),

I am a principal in the Blacklick Valley School District and currently completing my Doctoral Program in Administration and Leadership.

My study examines school climate and teachers' perceptions toward the climate within their school. I plan to describe and analyze factors influencing the climate within schools that may or may not affect Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as required by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) federal legislation.

Participation in this study involves completion of an on-line survey by your middle school teachers which will take approximately 25 minutes. It is anticipated that this research will provide insight to how school climate impacts academic achievement. Teachers will receive an email from the IUP Applied Research Lab (ARL) asking them to visit the following web site: INSERT and respond to the School Climate Survey based on their educational experiences as they relate to their current teaching position. The teachers' participation in this study will be strictly voluntary. The school with the highest rate of return however, will receive an assortment of books for their school library (a $500.00 value). Each middle school included in the study will be assigned a school code known only by the IUP ARL. Absolutely no information in this study will identify the teacher. The research is only concerned with group responses and group results will be known only by the IUP ARL. The researcher will not have access to the school codes.

I have attached a copy of the survey for your review. If you are willing to participate in this study, please complete one of the approved consent forms included and mail it in the envelope provided by -------- --, 2008. The other consent form can be kept for your records. If you have any questions concerning the study or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (814) 749-9211 Ext: 402 (work) or (814)674-2626

(home) or via e-mail at llansber@bvsd.k12.pa.us . Your time and cooperation are highly valued and deeply appreciated.

Sincerely,

Luke J. Lansberry, Doctoral Candidate
3764 Colonel Drake Highway
Patton, PA 16668
(814)749-9211 Ext: 402
llansber@bvsd.k12.pa.us

Dr. Robert Millward, Faculty Sponsor
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Administration & Leadership Studies
136 Stouffer Hall
Indiana, PA 15705
(724) 357-5593
Millward@.iup.edu

This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: 724/357-7730).

Appendix B

Superintendent's Informed Consent Form

Luke J. Lansberry, a student in the doctoral program in Leadership and Administration in the Department of Professional Studies in Education at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, is conducting a research study to understand more about the relationship between school climate and Adequate Yearly Progress. The specifics about this study have been explained in the accompanying cover letter.

This study has been approved by the IUP Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone 412-357-2222). If you are willing to permit participation in the study, please sign this consent form. Two copies of the consent form have been provided. Please keep one copy for your records. I will retain the other copy for my records. Please mail the signed copy back to me in the return envelope by February 25, 2008.

I certify that I have read the cover letter and understand the conditions of this study. Any questions that I have or will have about the study have been or will be addressed by the researcher. My signature on this consent form means that I am granting permission to allow distribution and voluntary completion of the survey in (name of school) Middle School.

I further understand that all information will be held in the strictest confidence. (An unsigned copy of the consent form has been provided to me for my records.)

_____ _____

Signature of Superintendent Date

Appendix C

Principal's Letter

(IUP Letterhead)

--------- --, 2008

Dear (Name of Principal),

I am a student in the Doctoral Program in Administration and Leadership in the Department of Professional Studies at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Your superintendent has agreed, pending your approval, to allow me to conduct this survey within your school. The purpose of this study is to examine the school climate. Climate within middle schools may or may not be a factor that contributes to Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as required by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) federal legislation.

Participation in this study will include completion of an on-line School Climate Survey by your teachers which should only take 25 minutes of their time. Your teachers will receive an email from Student Voice asking them to complete an on-line survey questionnaire as the method of data collecting for this research study. Because no names will be used, anonymity will be assured. Participation in this study is voluntary. Teachers are free to decide to participate or not. All information will be held in strictest confidence. The school with the highest rate of return however, will receive an assortment of books for their school library (a $500.00 value). Your teachers will not be identified in this study. No individual information will be used in this study. Schools will be assigned a code by the IUP Applied Research Lab (ARL) that will be emailed to your teachers along with the web address for completing the survey on-line. None of the individual survey information will be available to the researcher or any of your school personnel. In the event the findings in this study are published, no identities will ever be divulged.

May I have your permission to permit the IUP ARL to email the attached survey letters to your classroom teachers? The email they receive will contain a summary of the study and an internet web address that they can access to complete the on-line survey. Would you kindly email a list of your teachers' names and their email addresses to the IUP ARL at: cmaier@iup.edu

If you have any questions or require additional information, please feel free to contact me at home (814-674-2626), in my office (814-749-9211 Ext:402) or via e-mail at llansber@bvsd.k12.pa.us . Your time and cooperation are highly valued and deeply appreciated.

Sincerely,

Luke J. Lansberry, Doctoral Candidate
3764 Colonel Drake Highway
Patton, PA 16668
(814)749-9211 Ext: 402
llansber@bvsd.k12.pa.us

Dr. Robert Millward, Faculty Sponsor
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This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: 724/357-7730).

Appendix D

Participant's Letter

-------- --, 2008

Dear (name of participant),

I am a student in the Doctoral Program in Administration and Leadership in the Department of Professional Studies in Education at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Your superintendent and Principal have agreed to allow me to conduct this survey within your school. I am inviting you to participate in a study to examine school climate. The focus of this research study is Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as required by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) federal legislation.

The following information is provided in order to help you make an informed decision as to whether or not you'd like to participate.

Participation in this study will include completion of an on-line survey which would take 25 minutes of your time. Because no names will be used, your anonymity will be assured. Your participation in this study is voluntary. The school with the highest rate of return however, will receive an assortment of books for their school library (a $500.00 value). You are free to decide to participate or not. Your decision will not result in any loss of status to you as a teacher in your school, district, or community. If you choose to participate, all information will be held in the strictest of confidence.

You will not be identified by name in this study and no individual information will be used in this study. Your school was assigned the following code XXXXX by the IUP Applied Research Lab (ARL). The survey can be accessed at the following web site: INSERT. None of the individual survey information will be available to the researcher or anyone in your school district. No one in your school will know whether or not you decided to participate. In the event the findings in this study are published, no identities will ever be divulged.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please access the survey on-line and complete it **by -------- - -, 2008**.

Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

Luke J. Lansberry, Doctoral Candidate
3764 Colonel Drake Highway
Patton, PA 16668
(814)749-9211 Ext: 402
llansber@bvsd.k12.pa.us

Dr. Robert Millward
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This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: 724/357-7730).

Appendix E

Follow-up Post Card (14 Day)

-------- --, 2008

Dear (name of participant):

Approximately two weeks ago you should have received a School Climate Survey seeking input based on your educational experiences as they relate to your current teaching position.

If you have already completed and returned the School Climate Survey, thank you. If not, please do so today. Simply log on to this web site on your computer: INSERT WEB SITE HYPERLINK and enter the following School Access Code: XXXXX

Your input is critical. Although your participation is solicited, it is strictly voluntary. The school with the highest rate of return however, will receive an assortment of books for their school library (a $500.00 value).

Please feel free to call me at (814) 749-9211 Ext: 402 or email me at llansber@bvsd.k12.pa.us if you have any questions or concerns regarding the School Climate Survey.

Sincerely,

Luke J. Lansberry
Indiana University of PA Doctoral Candidate
3764 Colonel Drake Highway
Patton, PA 16668

This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: 724/357-7730).

Appendix F

Follow-up Letter (30 day)

-------- --, 2008

Dear (name of participant),

Approximately four weeks ago you should have received an emailed School Climate Survey seeking your opinion about the school climate in your middle school based on your educational experiences as they relate to your current teaching position. As of today, I have not received your completed survey. I would very much appreciate your feedback in the results.

The purpose of this research is to study Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as required by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) federal legislation.

Your input is critical. Although your participation is solicited, it is strictly voluntary. The school with the highest rate of return however, will receive an assortment of books for their school library (a $500.00 value). Please consider completing the School Climate Survey as soon as possible. Simply log-on to this web site on your computer: INSERT WEB SITE HYPERLINK and enter the following School Access Code: XXXXX

Please contact me at (814) 749-9211 Ext: 402 or at llansber@bvsd.k12.pa.us if you have any questions.

Thank you for your help!

Sincerely,

Luke J. Lansberry
Indiana University of PA Doctoral Candidate
3764 Colonel Drake Highway
Patton, PA 16668

This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: 724/357-7730).

Page - SCHOOL ECOLOGY SURVEY

Q1 Please enter your school code:		
[TextBox]		
	Required answers: 1	*Allowed answers: 1*

Q2 What is your gender?		
Male*[Code = 1]*		
Female*[Code = 2]*		
	Required answers: 1	*Allowed answers: 1*

Q3 What is your age?		
Under 25*[Code = 1]*		
25-45*[Code = 2]*		
46 or older*[Code = 3]*		
	Required answers: 1	*Allowed answers: 1*

Q4 How many years have you been teaching at this school?		
This is my first year.*[Code = 1]*		
2-10 years*[Code = 2]*		
11-20 years*[Code = 3]*		
21 or more years*[Code = 4]*		
	Required answers: 1	*Allowed answers: 1*

Next Page: Sequential

Page - 2

Q5 Which of the following represents your race?		
Asian*[Code = 1]*		
African American/Black*[Code = 2]*		
Native American*[Code = 3]*		
Hispanic/Latino*[Code = 4]*		
White*[Code = 5]*		
Other (please specify)*[Code = 6] [TextBox]*		
	Required answers: 1	*Allowed answers: 1*

Q6 Which best describes your school?		
Rural school*[Code = 1]*		
Suburban school*[Code = 2]*		
Urban school*[Code = 3]*		
	Required answers: 1	*Allowed answers: 1*

Q7 To what extent does the situation in which you work create stress for you?		
A great deal*[Code = 5]*		
A good deal*[Code = 4]*		
Somewhat*[Code = 3]*		
Slightly*[Code = 2]*		
Not at all*[Code = 1]*		
	Required answers: 1	*Allowed answers: 1*

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Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

Q8 I have a great deal of freedom to decide how I do my work.

Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*
Disagree*[Code = 2]*
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*
Agree*[Code = 4]*
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*

Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q9 In this school most students are actively engaged in school life.

Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*
Disagree*[Code = 2]*
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*
Agree*[Code = 4]*
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*

Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q10 Our chairperson/team leader usually gets what we need when negotiating with school administrators.

Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*
Disagree*[Code = 2]*
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*
Agree*[Code = 4]*
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*

Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q11 Too many rules and regulations interfere with how well I am able to do my job.

Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*
Disagree*[Code = 2]*
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*
Agree*[Code = 4]*
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*

Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q12 The students in this school are self directing.

Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*
Disagree*[Code = 2]*
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*
Agree*[Code = 4]*
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*

Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q13 Our chairperson/team leader is respected by school administrators.

Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*

Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*
Agree*[Code = 4]*
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*
Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

Q14 Staff members are tolerant of each other's opinions even if those opinions are different from their own.
Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*
Disagree*[Code = 2]*
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*
Agree*[Code = 4]*
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*
Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q15 Teachers are proud to teach in this school.
Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*
Disagree*[Code = 2]*
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*
Agree*[Code = 4]*
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*
Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q16 In my school, policies encourage openness in communication.
Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*
Disagree*[Code = 2]*
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*
Agree*[Code = 4]*
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*
Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q17 Our chairperson/team leader is seen as a leader by school administrators.
Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*
Disagree*[Code = 2]*
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*
Agree*[Code = 4]*
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*
Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q18 I would like to have my children attend this school.
Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*
Disagree*[Code = 2]*
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*
Agree*[Code = 4]*
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*
Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q19 In my school, no one has to fear the consequences of expressing opinions.	
Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*	
Disagree*[Code = 2]*	
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*	
Agree*[Code = 4]*	
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*	
	Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

Q20 There is a great deal of cooperative effort among staff.	
Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*	
Disagree*[Code = 2]*	
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*	
Agree*[Code = 4]*	
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*	
	Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q21 My principal solicits my opinion concerning issues affecting me.	
Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*	
Disagree*[Code = 2]*	
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*	
Agree*[Code = 4]*	
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*	
	Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q22 In my school, when decisions are made, it is usually clear what needs to be done to carry them out.	
Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*	
Disagree*[Code = 2]*	
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*	
Agree*[Code = 4]*	
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*	
	Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q23 In this school, students are enthusiastic about learning.	
Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*	
Disagree*[Code = 2]*	
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*	
Agree*[Code = 4]*	
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*	
	Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q24 In my school, the principal lets staff members know what is expected of them.	
Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*	
Disagree*[Code = 2]*	
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*	
Agree*[Code = 4]*	

Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*

Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q25 Staff members in my school can do their work in the way they think best.

Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*

Disagree*[Code = 2]*

Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*

Agree*[Code = 4]*

Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*

Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q26 Our chairperson/team leader is not afraid to express his/her opinion when talking with the principal.

Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*

Disagree*[Code = 2]*

Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*

Agree*[Code = 4]*

Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*

Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q27 In my school, the principal sets priorities, makes plans, and sees that they are carried out.

Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*

Disagree*[Code = 2]*

Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*

Agree*[Code = 4]*

Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*

Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

Q28 Nearly all students in this school achieve at or above their grade level.

Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*

Disagree*[Code = 2]*

Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*

Agree*[Code = 4]*

Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*

Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q29 In my school, the principal provides constructive feedback to teachers.

Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*

Disagree*[Code = 2]*

Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*

Agree*[Code = 4]*

Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*

Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q30 Our chairperson/team leader sees that what we need is made clear to the principal.

Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*

Disagree*[Code = 2]*
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*
Agree*[Code = 4]*
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*
Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q31 My principal changes my responsibilities without talking it over with me first.
Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*
Disagree*[Code = 2]*
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*
Agree*[Code = 4]*
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*
Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q32 Communication is good among the people in my school.
Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*
Disagree*[Code = 2]*
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*
Agree*[Code = 4]*
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*
Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q33 In my school, the principal encourages and assists the staff in developing goals for the school.
Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*
Disagree*[Code = 2]*
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*
Agree*[Code = 4]*
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*
Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q34 Staff members in my school are flexible; they can reconsider their positions on issues and are willing to change their minds.
Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*
Disagree*[Code = 2]*
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*
Agree*[Code = 4]*
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*
Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q35 Our chairperson/team leader seeks out the principal to get details about issues that would be likely to affect our work.
Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*
Disagree*[Code = 2]*
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*
Agree*[Code = 4]*
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*
Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

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To what extent ...

Q36 Is your job important to the functioning of the school?	
A great deal*[Code = 5]*	
A good deal*[Code = 4]*	
Somewhat*[Code = 3]*	
Slightly*[Code = 2]*	
Not at all*[Code = 1]*	
Required answers: 1	*Allowed answers: 1*

Q37 Do you feel a lot of pressure from your job just because you push yourself?	
A great deal*[Code = 5]*	
A good deal*[Code = 4]*	
Somewhat*[Code = 3]*	
Slightly*[Code = 2]*	
Not at all*[Code = 1]*	
Required answers: 1	*Allowed answers: 1*

Q38 Does your principal stress the importance of school goals?	
A great deal*[Code = 5]*	
A good deal*[Code = 4]*	
Somewhat*[Code = 3]*	
Slightly*[Code = 2]*	
Not at all*[Code = 1]*	
Required answers: 1	*Allowed answers: 1*

Q39 Does your work make a meaningful contribution?	
A great deal*[Code = 5]*	
A good deal*[Code = 4]*	
Somewhat*[Code = 3]*	
Slightly*[Code = 2]*	
Not at all*[Code = 1]*	
Required answers: 1	*Allowed answers: 1*

Q40 Does your principal recognize and reward good performance?	
A great deal*[Code = 5]*	
A good deal*[Code = 4]*	
Somewhat*[Code = 3]*	
Slightly*[Code = 2]*	
Not at all*[Code = 1]*	
Required answers: 1	*Allowed answers: 1*

Q41 Is there a friendly atmosphere among the people in your school?
A great deal*[Code = 5]*
A good deal*[Code = 4]*
Somewhat*[Code = 3]*

Slightly*[Code = 2]*
Not at all*[Code = 1]*
Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q42 Is your principal easy to approach?
A great deal*[Code = 5]*
A good deal*[Code = 4]*
Somewhat*[Code = 3]*
Slightly*[Code = 2]*
Not at all*[Code = 1]*
Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

To what extent ...

Q43 Do you feel a lot of pressure in your job?
A great deal*[Code = 5]*
A good deal*[Code = 4]*
Somewhat*[Code = 3]*
Slightly*[Code = 2]*
Not at all*[Code = 1]*
Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q44 Is your principal successful in obtaining recognition of the successes of the people he/she supervises?
A great deal*[Code = 5]*
A good deal*[Code = 4]*
Somewhat*[Code = 3]*
Slightly*[Code = 2]*
Not at all*[Code = 1]*
Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q45 Are district personnel aware of the problems and needs at your level?
A great deal*[Code = 5]*
A good deal*[Code = 4]*
Somewhat*[Code = 3]*
Slightly*[Code = 2]*
Not at all*[Code = 1]*
Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q46 Do you feel that having limited resources puts heavy pressure on you in your job?
A great deal*[Code = 5]*
A good deal*[Code = 4]*
Somewhat*[Code = 3]*
Slightly*[Code = 2]*
Not at all*[Code = 1]*
Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q47 Does your principal encourage teachers to exchange ideas and opinions?		
A great deal*[Code = 5]*		
A good deal*[Code = 4]*		
Somewhat*[Code = 3]*		
Slightly*[Code = 2]*		
Not at all*[Code = 1]*		
	Required answers: 1	*Allowed answers: 1*

Q48 Does your principal put a lot of pressure on you about your job?		
A great deal*[Code = 5]*		
A good deal*[Code = 4]*		
Somewhat*[Code = 3]*		
Slightly*[Code = 2]*		
Not at all*[Code = 1]*		
	Required answers: 1	*Allowed answers: 1*

Q49 Does your principal emphasize high standards of performance?		
A great deal*[Code = 5]*		
A good deal*[Code = 4]*		
Somewhat*[Code = 3]*		
Slightly*[Code = 2]*		
Not at all*[Code = 1]*		
	Required answers: 1	*Allowed answers: 1*

How often...

Q50 Does your principal utilize resource persons from the district to help teachers?		
Almost always*[Code = 5]*		
Often*[Code = 4]*		
Sometimes*[Code = 3]*		
Rarely*[Code = 2]*		
Never*[Code = 1]*		
	Required answers: 1	*Allowed answers: 1*

Q51 Do district personnel respond to ideas and suggestions from people at your level?		
Almost always*[Code = 5]*		
Often*[Code = 4]*		
Sometimes*[Code = 3]*		
Rarely*[Code = 2]*		
Never*[Code = 1]*		
	Required answers: 1	*Allowed answers: 1*

Q52 Are decisions in your school made by voting?		
Almost always*[Code = 5]*		
Often*[Code = 4]*		
Sometimes*[Code = 3]*		
Rarely*[Code = 2]*		

Never*[Code = 1]*

Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q53 Do you perform tasks on your job which you consider relatively unimportant or unnecessary?

Almost always*[Code = 5]*

Often*[Code = 4]*

Sometimes*[Code = 3]*

Rarely*[Code = 2]*

Never*[Code = 1]*

Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q54 Does your principal offer new ideas for job-related problems?

Almost always*[Code = 5]*

Often*[Code = 4]*

Sometimes*[Code = 3]*

Rarely*[Code = 2]*

Never*[Code = 1]*

Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q55 Do you feel that your job interferes with your personal life?

Almost always*[Code = 5]*

Often*[Code = 4]*

Sometimes*[Code = 3]*

Rarely*[Code = 2]*

Never*[Code = 1]*

Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

How often...

Q56 Do you feel constant pressure on your job because of time limitations?

Almost always*[Code = 5]*

Often*[Code = 4]*

Sometimes*[Code = 3]*

Rarely*[Code = 2]*

Never*[Code = 1]*

Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q57 Are decisions arrived at by your principal alone with no input from people in the school?

Almost always*[Code = 5]*

Often*[Code = 4]*

Sometimes*[Code = 3]*

Rarely*[Code = 2]*

Never*[Code = 1]*

Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q58 Does your principal hold staff meetings where the staff really discusses things?

Often*[Code = 4]*
Sometimes*[Code = 3]*
Rarely*[Code = 2]*
Never*[Code = 1]*

Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q59 Do you have to do things in your work that are against your better judgment?
Almost always*[Code = 5]*
Often*[Code = 4]*
Sometimes*[Code = 3]*
Rarely*[Code = 2]*
Never*[Code = 1]*

Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q60 Are decisions in your school reached through group discussion?
Almost always*[Code = 5]*
Often*[Code = 4]*
Sometimes*[Code = 3]*
Rarely*[Code = 2]*
Never*[Code = 1]*

Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

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Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

Q61 It is up to me to decide how my job should best be done.
Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*
Disagree*[Code = 2]*
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*
Agree*[Code = 4]*
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*

Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q62 My work is highly important.
Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*
Disagree*[Code = 2]*
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*
Agree*[Code = 4]*
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*

Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q63 It is easy to get my ideas across to my principal.
Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*
Disagree*[Code = 2]*

Agree*[Code = 4]*
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*
Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q64 Almost all students in this school achieve their potential.
Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*
Disagree*[Code = 2]*
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*
Agree*[Code = 4]*
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*
Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q65 In my school, the principal respects the opinions and beliefs of teachers.
Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*
Disagree*[Code = 2]*
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*
Agree*[Code = 4]*
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*
Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q66 I do things in my work that are likely to be accepted by some and not accepted by others.
Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*
Disagree*[Code = 2]*
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*
Agree*[Code = 4]*
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*
Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q67 In my school, both principal and teachers participate in making decisions which affect the school.
Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*
Disagree*[Code = 2]*
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*
Agree*[Code = 4]*
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*
Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

Q68 I have influence on the decisions within the school which directly affect me.
Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*
Disagree*[Code = 2]*
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*
Agree*[Code = 4]*
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*
Required answers: 1 *Allowed answers: 1*

Q69 Teachers in this school are "alive;" they are interested in life around them; they are doing interesting things outside of school.	
Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*	
Disagree*[Code = 2]*	
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*	
Agree*[Code = 4]*	
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*	
Required answers: 1	*Allowed answers: 1*

Q70 In my school, the principal promotes openness in the staff.	
Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*	
Disagree*[Code = 2]*	
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*	
Agree*[Code = 4]*	
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*	
Required answers: 1	*Allowed answers: 1*

Q71 When important decisions are made about the programs in the school, I personally have heard about the plan beforehand and have been involved in some of the discussions.	
Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*	
Disagree*[Code = 2]*	
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*	
Agree*[Code = 4]*	
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*	
Required answers: 1	*Allowed answers: 1*

Q72 In my school, meetings are such that persons can engage in an open and frank discussion of issues.	
Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*	
Disagree*[Code = 2]*	
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*	
Agree*[Code = 4]*	
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*	
Required answers: 1	*Allowed answers: 1*

Q73 Teachers in this school are "out in front," seeking better ways of teaching and learning.	
Strongly disagree*[Code = 1]*	
Disagree*[Code = 2]*	
Neither disagree nor agree*[Code = 3]*	
Agree*[Code = 4]*	
Strongly agree*[Code = 5]*	
Required answers: 1	*Allowed answers: 1*

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October 5, 2007

Dr. XXXXXXX, Superintendent
XXXXXXXXX School District
42X Glendale Lake Road
XXXXXX, PA 16XXX

Dear Dr. XXXXXX,

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and school improvement has captured the attention of educators throughout the United States as a result of the No Child Left Behind federal legislation. Consequently, I have chosen to study the relationship between school climate and AYP in Middle Schools throughout Pennsylvania, as the focus for my doctoral dissertation study at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. My dissertation study is quantitative and utilizes a School Ecology Survey (SES) created by Dr. Gene Hall and the Concerns Based Systems International.

With the help of the research laboratory staff at IUP, I have been able to utilize the Cronbach's Alpha test to establish high levels of *reliability* for the SES using data collected from a pilot study that was conducted with middle school teachers in the XXXXXX School District.

My next goal is to establish *validity* for the SES using a Panel of Experts who serve as school superintendents and principals knowledgeable about school climate. My hope is that you will consider participating in the panel of experts needed for reviewing the SES to ensure that it is a valid tool for evaluating school climate. Each of the questions has been organized into 16 domains ranging from Role Conflict to Student Characteristics. Feedback from experts like you in education will help me to establish validity for the SES. Please consider responding to the following questions as they relate to <u>each</u> statement in the attached 77-item pool:

1. **Review each item to ensure that it is sorted correctly into each of the 16 domains.**

2. **Delete items that do not fit into any of the domains or are redundant with other items.**
3. **Suggest wording changes for items that may not be clear.**

   For Example: A. *Reflects the current wording for question # 15 and* B., C., D. *might be suggestions that you might make to improve the current statement. So feel free to add your ideas if the statements are too vague or too general.*

   A. *Too many rules and regulations interfere with how well I am able to do my job.*

   B. *Too many rules interfere with how well I am able to do my job.*

   C. *Too many rules interfere with how well I am able to teach.*

   D. *Too many rules have a negative impact on my teaching*

   E. *What rule or regulation should be revised or eliminated in your school?**

   *(*Question E. is a question that a superintendent added at the end of the category and suggested that such a statement might help the researcher better understand the climate.)*
4. **Suggest additional items if the coverage of the domain is not adequate.**
5. **Complete the Item Analysis by placing an "X" in one of the boxes to the right of each statement.**

Please provide feedback regarding the 5 questions listed above by responding directly on either the attached SES, the Item Analysis page, the cover letter, or by adding additional pages.

Thank you in advance for your willingness to provide me with feedback on the SES. I have attached a self addressed stamped envelope and ask that you please return the SES with your feedback to me by **Friday, November 2, 2007**.

Sincerely,

Luke J. Lansberry

School Ecology Item Analysis

Please assist me in completing an item analysis by placing an "**X**" in one of the three boxes to the right of each statement:

	Item Analysis	Not Much Here	Adequate	Vital Information
	Role Conflict			
Q-15	Too many rules and regulations interfere with how well I am able to do my job.			
Q-57	How often do you perform tasks on your job which you consider relatively unimportant or unnecessary?			
Q-59	How often do you feel that your job interferes with your personal life?			
Q-63	How often do you have to do things in your work that are against your better judgment?			
Q-70	I do things in my work that are likely to be accepted by some and not accepted by others.			
	Job Autonomy			
Q-12	I have a great deal of freedom to decide how I do my work.			
Q-29	Staff members in my school can do their work in the way they think best.			
Q-65	It is up to me to decide how my job should best be done.			
	Job Importance			
Q-40	To what extent is your job important to the functioning of the school?			
Q-43	To what extent does your work make a meaningful contribution?			
Q-66	My work is highly important.			
	Job Pressure			
Q-41	To what extent do you feel a lot of pressure from your job just because you push yourself?			
Q-47	To what extent do you feel a lot of pressure in your job?			
Q-50	To what extent do you feel that having limited resources puts heavy pressure on you in your job?			
Q-52	To what extent does your principal put a lot of pressure on you about your job?			
Q-60	Do you feel constant pressure on your job because of time limitations?			
	Leader Support			
Q-44	To what extent does your principal recognize and reward good performance?			
Q-46	To what extent is your principal easy to approach?			

Q-48 To what extent is your principal successful in obtaining recognition of the successes of the people he/she supervises?

Leader Goal Emphasis

Q-42 To what extent does your principal stress the importance of school goals?

Q-53 To what extent does your principal emphasize high standards of performance?

Q-58 How often does your principal offer new ideas for job-related problems?

Leader Work Facilitation

Q-26 In my school, when decisions are made, it is usually clear what needs to be done to carry them out.

Q-28 In my school, the principal lets staff members know what is expected of them.

Q-31 In my school, the principal sets priorities, makes plans, and sees that they are carried out.

Q-33 In my school, the principal provides constructive feedback to teachers.

Q-37 In my school, the principal encourages and assists the staff in developing goals for the school.

Leader Interaction Facilitation

Q-51 To what extent does your principal encourage teachers to exchange ideas and opinions?

Q-61 How often are decisions arrived at by your principal alone with no input from people in the school?

Q-62 How often does your principal hold staff meetings where the staff really discuss things?

Leader Upward Interaction

Q-14 Our chairperson/team leader usually gets what we need when negotiating with school administrators.

Q-17 Our chairperson/team leader is respected by school administrators.

Q-21 Our chairperson/team leader is seen as a leader by school administrators.

Q-30 Our chairperson/team leader is not afraid to express his/her opinion when talking with the principal.

Q-34 Our chairperson/team leader sees that what we need is made clear to the principal.

Q-39 Our chairperson/team leader seeks out the principal to get details about issues that would be likely to affect our work.

Leader Confidence and Trust

Q-25 My principal solicits my opinion concerning issues affecting me.

Q-35 My principal changes my responsibilities without talking it over with me first.

Q-67 It is easy to get my ideas across to my principal.

Workgroup Cooperation, Friendliness and Warmth

Q-48 Staff members are tolerant of each other's opinions even if those opinions are different from their own.

Q-24 There is a great deal of cooperative effort among staff.

Q-36 Communication is good among the people in my school.

Q-38 Staff members in my school are flexible; they can reconsider their positions on issues and are willing to change their minds.

Q-45 To what extent is there a friendly atmosphere among the people in your school?

Openness of Expression

Q-20 In my school, policies encourage openness in communication.

Q-23 In my school, no one has to fear the consequences of expressing opinions.

Q-69 In my school, the principal respects the opinions and beliefs of teachers.

Q-74 In my school, the principal promotes openness in the staff.

Q-76 In my school, meetings are such that persons can engage in an open and frank discussion of issues.

Esprit de Corps

Q-19 Teachers are proud to teach in this school.

Q-22 I would like to have my children attend this school.

Q-73 Teachers in this school are "alive"; they are interested in life around them; they are doing interesting things outside of school.

Q-77 Teachers in this school are "out in front", seeking better ways of teaching and learning.

Planning and Effectiveness

Q-49 To what extent are district personnel aware of the problems and needs at your level?

Q-55 How often do district personnel respond to ideas and suggestions from people at your level?

Q-54 How often does your principal utilize resource persons from the district to help teachers?

Decision-Making Characteristics

Q-64 How often are decisions in your school reached through group discussion?

Q-56 How often are decisions in your school made by voting?

Q-71 In my school, both principal and teachers participate in making decisions which affect the school.

Q-72 I have influence on the decisions within the school which directly affect me.

Q-75 When important decisions are made about the programs in the school, I personally have heard about the plan beforehand and have been involved in some of the discussions.

Student Characteristics

Q-13 In this school most students are actively engaged in school life.

Q-16 The students in this school are self directing.

Q-27 In this school, students are enthusiastic about learning.

Q-32 Nearly all students in this school achieve at or above their grade level.

Q-68 Almost all students in this school achieve their potential.